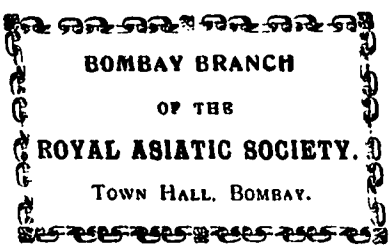
00047665



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 March, 2016

OOAd1

00047665

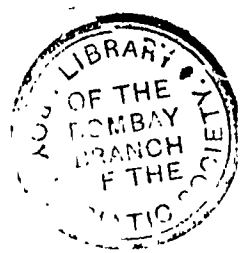
Cambridge Essays,

contributed by

Members of the University.

47665 av

1855.



London:

John W. Parker and Son,

West Strand.

042
Comm/Cl...
47665

LONDON:
SAVILL AND EDWARDS, PRINTERS,
CHANDOS STREET.

PREFACE.

THIS volume, which may by the public favour prove the first of a series, is, like the corresponding Oxford volume, 'not intended to advocate any particular set of opinions.'

Each contributor, by signing his name, becomes answerable for his own work. We are thus spared the affectation of a perfect conformity of views, which does not, and cannot, exist; though the nearest possible approximation to it is most likely to be found among men whose youth has been subject to the same influences, and passed within the same wall.

Lest the title, *Cambridge Essays*, should attract or deter readers, by suggesting astronomical calculations and transcendental analysis, it is necessary to state that no scientific subjects are treated of in our pages, except such as may be made intelligible and interesting to the general public of educated men.

CAMBRIDGE, *October*, 1855.

CONTENTS.

Essay.		Page
I.	*The Life and Genius of Molière.* By Christopher Knight Watson, M.A.	1
II.	*The English Language in America.* By Charles Astor Bristed, B.A.	57
III.	*Notes on Modern Geography.* By Francis Galton, M.A., F.G.S.	79
IV.	*Limitations to Severity in War.* By Charles Buxton, M.A.	110
V.	*On the Transmutation of Matter.* By George Downing Liveing, M.A.	123
VI.	*The Relation of Novels to Life.* By Fitzjames Stephen, B.A.	148
VII.	*Future Prospects of the British Navy.* By Robert Edgar Hughes, M.A.	193
VIII.	*Alfred Tennyson's Poems.* By George Brimley, M.A.	226
IX.	*General Education and Classical Studies.* By William George Clark, M.A.	281

CAMBRIDGE ESSAYS.

THE LIFE AND GENIUS OF MOLIÈRE.

WHAT are the authentic facts in the life of Jean Baptiste Poquelin, *alias* Molière? What are the elements and characteristics of that genius which his works bewray? To what extent are those elements and characteristics, on the one hand the produce of that spirit by which the whole literature of his age was governed, or, on the other, the true and genuine manifestation of the man's own soul? The vices and foibles he so greatly dares to ridicule, do they change their nature and their name, when stripped of point-lace and peruke? are they like clocks and ruffles *à la* Louis Quatorze? has mankind outgrown them, like measles or hooping-cough, or are they a chronic disease, affecting every age and condition of society? Such are the main inquiries towards the solution of which the writer of these pages would fain hope, in his measure and degree, to contribute something, were it but a mite. As regards the events in Molière's life, we plume ourselves less on the facts narrated than on the fictions omitted —fictions at which most biographers, we allow, are prone to sip, but which Molière's swallow at a gulp. In like manner, as regards our criticisms, we have no desire to be original at the risk of being wrong, holding it sorry wisdom to act in such matters after the fashion of those birds of whom old Fuller speaks, who cannot take wing except the wind be contrary. At the same time, we are determined to think for ourselves, firmly believing, with Molière, that 'la bonne façon de juger d'une pièce, est de se laisser prendre aux choses, et de n'avoir ni prévention aveugle, ni complaisance affectée, ni délicatesse ridicule.' (*La Critique de l'École des Femmes.* Scene vi.)

It behoves us, *in limine*, to say a word or two on the various sources of every kind, which we have at our disposal. Manuscripts of Molière there are none.* Confided by his widow to the care of Lagrange, an actor in the 'troupe' and an editor of the collected works of the great poet, it is conjectured that they came to the hammer, on the death of that individual, which took place in 1692. We have relegated to a note such other facts as are to be gleaned respecting their subsequent history. It was in the year 1682 that Lagrange, aided by Vinot, also a friend of Molière, completed his editorial labours. To the general reader it may not be an oft-told tale, that of the edition thus completed, and as it came from the press, one solitary copy is known to exist. In the technical language of French bibliography, an edition of any work is said to be 'cartonnée' when the integrity of any of the sheets composing it is destroyed by the substitution of one or more detached leaves, called 'cartons,' in the place of such fourth, eighth, twelfth, &c. parts of the sheet as have been deemed objectionable. To this process (by which Voltaire recommended superseding lists of errata) Molière's works were subjected; the only copy which escaped interpolation, and thus preserved the genuine text of Molière's plays, having belonged to M. de la Reynie, who hurled the thunders of censorship at the time, in his capacity of 'lieutenant général de police.' The chief stumbling-block was the famous scene with the beggar, in *Don Juan*, but other passages shared the same fate. It is only within a comparatively recent period that these inter-

---

* Having been led to conjecture that the Archives of the Comédie Française might contain some precious relics of Molière's handwriting, we availed ourselves of the kindness of a common friend to procure from M. Samson, of histrionic celebrity, some precise information on this subject. The result we give in his own words:—'Aucun manuscrit, pas une seule ligne de la main de Molière n'existe dans les archives du Théâtre Français. Les manuscrits ont ils en effet été anéantis par l'incendie du Théâtre? (This took place in 1799.) Quelques personnes croient qu'ils avaient disparu avant ce temps: ils assignent à cette disparition des causes qu'il est inutile de rapporter puisque ce ne sont que de simple conjectures et que rien n'est prouvé à cet égard.' M. Samson here alludes to a vague rumour that in 1792 Fabre d'Eglantine purloined certain papers of Molière's writing, which, up to that time had been in the possession of the Comédie Française. He goes on to state that he has himself a *fac simile* of a signature by Molière appended to a receipt, of which the original, he believes, exists at the Bibliothéque Impériale. Apropos of relics of Molière, we may add that the same letter informs us, that there is no reason whatever for supposing that the 'fauteuil' always used in representations of the *Malade Imaginaire* is the same as that in which Molière (so runs the legend) was seized with no imaginary malady.

polations were discovered. La Reynie's copy found its way to Constantinople, and it was not till 1833 that it was added to the treasures of M. de Soleine's famous collection of dramatists. Bought by him for only 3*l.*, it was sold, at his decease, for upwards of ten times that amount, to M. Armand Bertin, the lamented editor of the *Journal des Débats*. What sum it may ultimately realise, it would be hazardous to conjecture. Suffice it to say, that last year, in spite of the Eastern question, it was knocked down for 50*l.* to the Comte de Montalivet. To dwell upon the importance of this unique copy as the touchstone of Molière's text, seems superfluous. The edition of 1682 has, however, a further merit, which remained unscathed by the scissors of censorship—the Preface furnishes the only narrative of the events in Molière's career on which we can rely with implicit confidence. By what it says, no less than by what it leaves unsaid, it refutes a number of silly misstatements—to use no harsher term—with which later biographers have not scrupled to season their pages. Grimarest's work, for example, the standard authority for all that *might* have taken place in Molière's life, is there proved to merit Boileau's summary criticism,—'a book not worth speaking of,'—by which yet later biographers would have done well to abide.

The most recent edition of Molière's works (Didot, Paris, 1855, Edition Lefévre) combines with great cheapness both the advantages as to the text and the life of Molière which have here been ascribed to the edition of 1682. We owe it to the courtesy of Messieurs Didot, from whose press it issued last year, that the four octavo volumes of which it is composed are now at our elbow, while we are writing these pages. After carefully examining its contents, we feel no scruple whatever in recommending it warmly to the English public. The notes —selected from the best commentators—have the rare merit of being excellent in kind, without being oppressive in number.

We pass at a bound from the earliest to the latest biographer of Molière, from 1682 to 1851. To a man of greater critical acumen than M. Bazin, the standard historian of the reign of Louis XIII., the task of exposing the danger of forsaking the fountain head, Lagrange, for that broken cistern, Grimarest, could with difficulty have been confided. Into any æsthetical criticism of Molière's plays, the *Notes Historiques sur la Vie de Molière* (Paris, Techener, 1851), does not pretend to enter. Still, its value can scarcely be overrated, such is the shrewdness, so inexorable the rigour, with which all preceding biographies of Molière are dissected and scrutinized. One defect, and a very grave defect it is, this book certainly has. It is written in a spirit of acrimony and self-sufficiency, which

leads one to suppose that the author believed himself, by special licence infallible; a notion very much the reverse of the truth. We have recently put ourselves in communication with M. Taschereau, the author (it is superfluous to state) of by far the most elaborate life of Molière that has yet been given to the public. As this work has, not unfrequently, been made the object of M. Bazin's somewhat flippant censures, we thought it but fair to the author to see what could be said in defence. Courteous by double right,—a Frenchman and a man of letters,—M. Taschereau sent us some highly valuable notes, in which he shows that even M. Bazin has been betrayed into hypotheses and statements which will not bear examination. Of these notes we shall make fitting use, and we are too glad to put on record the obligations we are under to M. Taschereau for not having suffered his onerous duties at the Bibliothéque Impériale to interfere with his complying with our request. When his *Vie de Molière* first appeared (1825), Sir Walter Scott introduced it to the notice of English readers by an able article in the *Foreign Quarterly Review*. We regret that the fourth edition, which came into the world a short time ago, has not now met with a worthier godfather. And now to business, commencing with the particulars usual at the threshold of a biographical narrative.*

It would appear, then,—and we can produce our vouchers,—that on the 27th of April, 1621, Jean Poquelin, 'tapissier,' led to the hymeneal altar one Marie Cressé, and that of this marriage was born, in due course, to wit, on the 15th January, 1622, Jean Baptiste Poquelin, hereafter to be surnamed Molière. Tourists to Paris may have observed a small narrow building, in the Rue de la Tonnellerie, No. 3, leading from the Rue St. Honoré, the groundfloor whereof is occupied by one Naudin, who furnishes 'Draperies et Nouveautés' to the lieges of Paris. In a circular niche over the shop stands a bust, and under the niche runs the following inscription: 'J. B. Poquelin de Molière. Cette maison a été bâtie sur l'emplacement de celle où il naquit l'an 1620.' Dot it all down in your note-book, Mr. Sightseer; but, hark you! leave room to add: 'This is the house, as 1620 is the year, in which Molière was *not* born.' In a city such as Paris, where so much attention is paid to mementos of the worthies of France, it seems curious that the authorities who have charge of public monu-

* In enumerating the sources at our disposal, we must not omit M. Génin's *Lexique de la Langue de Molière*, a valuable repertory of words and idioms peculiar to Molière. The English reader should be warned, however, that many of M. Génin's philological crotchets have not been endorsed by other and greater masters of the art.

ments should never have repaired the mistake committed in 1799 and discovered in 1833. It was the house forming the corner of the Rue St. Honoré (No. 96) and the Rue des Vieilles Étuves (No. 2), that ought to have borne the words 'siste viator.' In Molière's day it went by the designation of 'La maison des singes,' the beam forming the angle of the street having been covered with sculptures of the thirteenth century, representing a knowing old monkey sitting quietly at the bottom of a tree, up which his more thoughtless and impetuous comrades clambered with such vehemence that all the apples left the boughs and became the prize of the gentleman at the base, whose physiognomy, if one may judge from the engraving in the *Musée Français* (the sculptures themselves are lost), wears an expression of serene contempt. To our apprehension, the device was not unworthy of the house of one who so sagaciously scanned the follies of those educated monkeys called men.

Molière's father, we have said, exercised the vocation of 'tapissier.' Those who bear in mind the degree of refinement which we are warranted in attributing to the furniture of those days—witness the specimens in the Louvre, or the Maison Cluny, and the 'inventaires' in the archives of the Bibliothéque Impériale—will not fall into the error of supposing, with some of Molière's biographers, that the position of 'tapissier,' occupied by M. Poquelin, senior, and others of that 'ilk,' was necessarily situate on the lowest rounds of the social ladder, or incompatible with any but inferior mental acquirements. Unless, indeed, they be taken in the snare by which so many biographers lame their veracity beyond hope of cure, and think to enhance the glories of Molière's meridian splendour by shrouding his aurora in murky clouds. No doubt it makes a pretty frontispiece to a life of Molière, to represent him as compelled by a stern sire to aid in decorating the salons of Paris, and to forego furnishing his own brain, that upper story of the house of flesh. That one who was destined by fate (whatever that is) to polish his mother tongue with the graces of thought should be doomed to spend life's early prime in polishing his father's tables with spirit of turpentine; this, indeed, if properly seasoned with expressions of indignation against the father, and of admiration for the nascent genius of the son, might make a book lively, thrilling, readable—anything but probable, just, or true.

That we are warranted in attributing to Molière's father a higher social status than is generally conceded to him will, we think, appear from the fact, that in 1631 he was appointed by Louis XIII. 'tapissier valet-de-chambre' to the Crown. We gather from authentic sources that these functionaries were

eight in number; that they went on duty by turns, two at a time, for a quarter of a year, forming part of the royal household, and receiving the sum of 337 livres, in addition to such profits as they might derive from supplying the furniture of the royal palaces. In 1637, M. Poquelin succeeded in securing the reversion of this office for his eldest son, who was then in his fifteenth year. It may be well to warn the reader not to infer, from this thoughtful measure on the part of the father, that he had any intention of lashing down his son to the handicraft he pursued himself. The office was so much property, and might any day be converted into hard cash, if his son had no inclination to fulfil its duties.

Biographers, like nature, abhor a vacuum. In order to fill up the blank which presents itself in Molière's boyhood, and at the same time to trace back, as far as possible, the germs of future greatness, it was resolved that the austerity of the father should melt before the kinder influences of a grandsire, who now and then extorted permission to take his grandson to witness the performances at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. Unfortunately, it was discovered that the aforesaid benevolent old gentleman quitted the world's stage only four years after Molière entered it. But this incongruity was not sufficient to throw biographers off the scent. It certainly was very improper on the part of old Poquelin's father to take his departure thus prematurely, but the mother's side would answer equally well; and as old Cressé had the civility to live till the year 1636, on him devolved the duty of teaching Molière, the boy, what Molière, the man, should do his utmost to avoid,—bad acting and worse plays.

Of course we are not going to the opposite extreme by flatly denying that Molière ever went to a play. But to suppose that he first became conscious of his vocation by witnessing such actors as Bellerose, Gautier Garguille, Gros Guillaume, and Turlupin make fools of themselves and dupes of the public, is an absurdity so gross, that for our own part we should prefer adopting the Turkish theory, that every man's brain contains a neat little roll of parchment, whereon is inscribed his future career, be it that of a drayman or a dramatist. As to young Poquelin, we have no scruple whatever in confessing our utter ignorance of everything connected with him up to the year 1637, when he commenced his studies at the College Clermont, now known by the name of Louis le Grand. During the five years that he attended classes at that institution, or received the private instruction of Gassendi, he numbered among his associates men who were sufficiently famous, and more than sufficiently infamous, to entitle them

to some notice in any narrative of Molière's life which aimed at minute completeness.

The exigencies of space, however, will not allow us to forget that we are writing, not a life, but an essay on the life of Molière. Accordingly, we are compelled to omit from these pages interesting details on Chapelle, Bernier, Cyrano de Bergerac, Hesnaut, and Condé's brother, the Prince de Conti, which would otherwise have found a place. Those who are disposed to murmur at such an omission must console themselves with the reflection that, after all, the influences exerted upon Molière by the associates above enumerated were probably of very secondary importance, when compared with the spirit breathed alike into him and them by the teaching of Gassendi,—a man who has been called with justice 'philosophorum literatissimus, literatorum maximè philosophus.' The recent and accomplished translator of the *Port-Royal Logic*—Mr. Baynes—observes in one of his notes to that work, that in France 'philosophers who have either directly or indirectly been indebted to him for their doctrine, have been lauded with acclamations as original, while he himself, one of the first men of his age, has been treated with the injustice of misrepresentation, or the still greater injustice of neglect.' It is impossible to believe that Molière could have been brought into the close relationship of teacher and pupil with such a man as Gassendi, the friend of Galileo and Kepler, the precursor of Newton and of Locke, without being imbued with the spirit which stirred the heart and braced the intellect of the philosopher. In those days the relationship in question was a far closer bond than now. But even in the nineteenth century there are not a few, we apprehend, among those who have passed through our Universities, who will readily and gratefully confess the tone and colour, the direction and stimulus given to their minds by being brought into contact with the well-fed, genial intellects of those who govern or guide the efforts of the student. In the caustic boldness with which Molière laughed down the foibles and exposed the vices of the age, in the sturdy determination with which he made ready his bow against shams and impostures of every kind, we are inclined to suspect that the shaft was feathered by one who ventured to question the supremacy of Aristotle and to wrestle with the dogmas of Descartes.

Grimarest, the standard authority—we cannot too often repeat it—for all that did *not* take place in the life of Molière, despatches our hero, at the expiration of his studies, on a voyage to Narbonne, in his capacity as one of the royal household of Louis XIII. Voltaire thought to christen this child

of Grimarest's brain by giving it a date. He was so unfortunate as to fix on a year, 1641, when to Narbonne the King did not go. It might have been expected that the death, or rather the murder, of Cinq-Mars and of De Thou were events sufficiently note-worthy to prevent a mistake in dating a voyage which was disgraced by so foul a mockery of justice. But, waiving the error of 1641 for 1642, it may safely be affirmed that the whole affair is a pure fabrication, especially as the reasons assigned for Molière's supplying his father's place (even admitting that it happened to be his father's turn to wait on the King), namely, the age and infirmities of the elder Poquelin, are notoriously too ridiculous to deserve a moment's consideration. He was at that time in the vigour of manhood, only forty-six years of age; and as to infirmities, they did not prevent him, twenty years later, from discharging those very duties with respect to which Grimarest, Voltaire, and Co. now pronounce him superannuated. Suffice it to say that Lagrange and Vinot, in the memoir already spoken of, are utterly silent on the voyage in question. From them we learn that when Molière had finished his collegiate course, he applied himself to the study of the law,—a fact which shows that Molière was destined for the liberal professions, and thus corroborates the fact already insisted on in these pages with respect to the position of M. Poquelin. Allowing three years for the prosecution, real or nominal (a distinction not peculiar, we apprehend, to Molière's day), of his legal craft, we shall have brought down our narrative to the year 1645, being the twenty-third of Molière's life natural, and the first of his life theatrical.

This last point is placed beyond the reach of doubt by testimony of the most unequivocal character. We cannot, however, speak with the same amount of certainty as to the causes which induced Molière to abandon such of the liberal professions as he may previously have had in view, for the fitful vicissitudes which then—nor only then—accompanied the lives of players:

> Those purple emperors who in buskins tread,
> And rule imaginary worlds for bread.

This were no doubt a tempting opportunity to throw in a few glowing paragraphs about the impetuosity of genius, which leads men to disregard the ordinary dictates of prudence in order to win them a niche in the temple of Fame, which occasionally proves to be the temple of Famine. The writer of these pages, however, contents himself with the humbler part, of laying before his readers the following extract from

the 'Historiettes' of Tallemant des Réaux, which tends to prove that the efficient cause of Molière's abandoning the forum for the '*foyer*' had much more to do with the inspirations of a petticoat than with those of genius. At the close of a most interesting sketch of the chief actors of his day, this contemporary of Molière adds:

I will wind up with Béjart. I have never seen her act, but she is said to be the best actress going. She is with a provincial 'troupe.' She has acted at Paris, but that was in a third 'troupe,' which only stayed there a short time. . . . . A young fellow named Molière quitted the benches of the Sorbonne to go after her: he was for a long time in love with her; used to give hints to the 'troupe,' which he ultimately joined on his marriage with Béjart. He is the author of some cleverish plays: as an actor he is nothing extraordinary, except that he makes you laugh.

Now, if we bear in mind that this extract was penned in the year 1656, when Molière's reputation was both small, and confined to the provinces (for, as we shall presently see, Molière had not yet returned to Paris), we shall not feel ourselves justified in cavilling at the statement it contains because that prosy old gossip, Tallemant des Réaux, has substituted theology for law, and raised a mistress to the rank of a wife.

In plain words, we believe that the actress in question, Madeleine Béjart, offered greater attractions to young Molière than the pages of Cujas and Tribonian; and as this lady was some years his senior, and not by any means inexperienced in the wiles of the world, we can easily believe that both she and her family—for there were four Béjarts in the troupe—thought it a very good speculation to enlist the services of a well-educated young man such as Jean Baptiste Poquelin. To this name was added, in the year aforesaid, 1645, the more famous surname of Molière.

One more circumstance remains to be mentioned before we take our leave of the year which inaugurated Molière's dramatic career. We shall best consult brevity by quoting the words of his biographer, Lagrange:

Il tâcha dans ses premières années de s'établir à Paris avec plusieurs enfants de famille, qui, par son exemple, s'engagèrent comme lui dans le parti de la comédie, sous le titre de l'Illustre Théâtre: mais ce dessein ayant manqué de succés (ce qui arrive à beaucoup de nouveautés), il fut obligé de courir par les provinces du royaume, où il commença à s'acquérir une fort grande réputation.

A play by one Magnon, printed in 1645, which adds to its title of *Artaxerce* the words 'representée par l'Illustre Théâtre,' shows what we are to understand by 'ses premières années.'

With regard to Molière's provincial life, which occupies a

space of not less than twelve years, our information is so flimsy and fragmentary that we think it best to avoid the temptation of filling up lacunæ with imaginary hypotheses, by referring the reader once for all to the works of Messieurs Taschereau and Bazin, or the *Biographie Universelle*, where he will find all needful, and some needless, particulars respecting that obscure period, from 1646 to 1658, which Molière spent at Nantes, Vienne, Bordeaux, Lyons, Pézenas, Béziers, Grenoble, and Rouen; the most important facts being that the *Etourdi* was acted at Lyons, in 1653, and the *Dépit Amoureux* at Béziers, in 1656. We shall then ask him to accompany us to scenes of a very different character: from the barber's shop at Pézenas, we find ourselves transplanted to that other Babylon, the Court of the Fourteenth Louis,—a king in bud, for Mazarin yet lives. Gladly would we recal that 24th day of October, 1658, when the chief of a company of strolling players first made his bow before a monarch whose taste for everything truly great in letters, art, and science, was characteristic of one whose very vices have a dash of grandeur. After assiduous efforts, Molière succeeded—and we may believe he owed his success to De Conti's patronage—in obtaining permission to assume the title of the 'troupe de Monsieur,' the King's brother, and to give a theatrical entertainment 'devant leurs Majestés, et toute la cour.' There was much to abash a stouter heart than his. The place itself—the 'salle des gardes' of what was called the 'vieux Louvre,' from its being built in the reign of Henry II.—he can scarcely have felt at home in. But what was that to the company! A king who, though young, was always cold and grave, even to austerity; then, perhaps, yet colder and graver than usual, for he was on the eve of leaving Paris on an errand of which the ostensible object, to compass a marriage, would only serve more effectually to frustrate an object yet dearer—the gratification of a passion. Mazarin, too,—for we cannot but suppose him to have been present—sate with a care-knit brow, plotting dramas on a wider stage, and meditating how he can thwart his King and serve his country by breaking off the intrigue, or yet, worse (for so he deemed it), the marriage, between Louis and his niece. It were idle to speculate on the other personages present. This much we know, that not the least severe of Molière's trials was the fact that among the spectators were the 'troupe royale' of the 'Théâtre de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne.' The lordly lines of Corneille's *Nicomède*, a noble play, had scarcely died upon the ear, when Molière came forward. Yes! there he stands! In stature he is far from imposing; in feature he is anything but comely. To judge from the way in which

he plants his feet, you would think he was doing duty as a parenthesis: he has a good calf, but still it does not help to keep him upright; he stoops forward, as if his shoulders were bent on effecting a meeting; his mouth is wide, his lips remarkably thick, his nose large, not pointed, but so shaped as if Nature had foreseen how often its owner would turn it up; his eyebrows are black, and so shaggy that the orbs beneath seem like a soft still light athwart a tree; as much of the forehead as is not hid by the wig is slightly concave; neck he has little or none. What strikes you most in his face is the tone of sorrowful earnestness, the settled melancholy, which forms, if we may so speak, the background of the expression. Akin to this is the serenity and calmness which gait and feature alike bewray. The whole cast of the man's countenance reminds you, in this respect, of the statues of Terence and Menander (both of them genuine), casts of which, by the way, are to be seen at Sydenham. In all three, you would not hesitate to say that powers of observation were developed in the highest degree. The reader, however, will ask, how came it that a man so ungainly as Molière met with such eminent success as an actor. As to our description, we can only state that it is warranted, not merely by bust and portrait, but by extant accounts of him by men who saw him on the stage. These accounts, however, we believe to be perfectly compatible with the most signal triumphs. For the great fascination of Molière's person we apprehend to have been, that every limb and muscle of his body had something to say for itself: he had all that eloquence of silence for which great actors are so conspicuous; we mean that, even when the tongue was mute, a gesture, a twitch of the lip, a shrug of the shoulder, were rife with speech. To use the words of a contemporary, he was an actor every inch of him, from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. A short, sharp cough, which was habitual to him, did him good service, we are told, in exciting the laughter of his audience. Look at him now, as he modestly thanks their Majesties, Louis and his mother, for the kind indulgence with which they had witnessed the performance of his 'troupe' in the *Nicoméde;* mark the adroitness with which he drops a compliment at the feet of the rival and royal 'troupe,' by saying that he and his actors were but feeble copies of those 'first-rate models.' 'As, however, His Majesty had graciously tolerated their rustic ways, he humbly craved permission to exhibit one of those entertainments which had gotten him some reputation, and with which he had regaled the provinces.'

The piece represented—a one-act farce, called the *Docteur Amoureux*—has not come down to us, much to Boileau's regret,

the very dust of Molière's writings being precious as gold. The triumph of the author-actor was so complete, his rendering of the 'docteur' so perfect, that the King gave him permission to establish himself at Paris.

La salle du Petit-Bourbon lui fut accordée pour y représenter la comédie alternativement avec les comédiens Italiens. [Hence the phrase 'aux Français,' by way of distinction from the Italian 'troupe.'] Cette troupe dont M. de Molière était le chef, et qui, comme je l'ai dit, prit le titre de la Troupe de Monsieur, commença à représenter en public le 3 Novembre, 1658, et donna pour nouveautés, *L'Étourdi* et le *Dépit Amoureux*, qui n'avaient jamais été joués à Paris.—*Lagrange*, 9.

In spite of the absence from Paris of the Court, in spite of the presence of a giant, *plus* a whale*—two serious rivals—Molière's success in the capital was by no means inferior to that which had attended him in the provinces. As we now find ourselves in presence of Molière's published works, it behoves us to say a few words on each of the plays by which this triumph was secured.

We have spoken of triumph and success. Still, we think it would be sheer affectation to withhold our candid opinion, that if the man who wrote the *Étourdi* had not written the *Tartuffe* and the *Misanthrope*, no one would think of admiring, much less reading it. The fact is, the only merit which fairly belongs to it is relative in kind and inferior in degree: relative in kind, because in Lilliput Gullivers are Gogs, and, incredible as it may appear, the *Etourdi* outtopped the comedies of Scarron and Scudéri, by which it was preceded, as much as it was itself surpassed by those productions of Molière by which it was followed; inferior in degree, because the play is made up of a number of episodical incidents and intrigues, which succeed one another like the slides of a magic lantern, and which have no further connexion than the common object they endeavour to compass.

Et chaque acte dans la pièce est une pièce entière.

Still, amid all the defects which impartial criticism may discover in this play, we must in justice remember that the flow of language, the animation of the dialogue, the quickness of the repartee, give undeniable proof that a vast stride has been effected in this, the maiden comedy of our author.

Greatly inferior even to the *Étourdi* is the next play, the *Dépit Amoureux*, taken as a whole. We make this reserve, because one of the scenes (the scene from which the play takes its name) is perhaps the most charming in all Molière's works.

* *Notes Historiques sur la vie de Molière*, p. 53.

We can best palliate the sentence of condemnation we pass on the play by stating that the scene in question is almost the only part which is entirely Molière's own, the rest being borrowed, either in idea or detail, from still worse Italian plays. The words 'dépit amoureux' might be translated 'lovers' quarrels,' though the word 'dépit' foreshadows that 'amoris redintegratio,' which Terence couples with the 'amantium iræ.' The scene in Molière's play (at the end of the fourth act) is the counterpart, or French version, of the famous 'Donec gratus eram tibi,' &c. of Horace. After the master and mistress have gone through their 'iræ' and 'redintegratio,' valet and suivante follow suit. The effect of the contrast in style is so irresistibly comic, that it almost redeems the dull indecency of the remainder of the play.

Nearly a twelvemonth elapsed before Molière presented the public with a new piece. It is idle to conjecture how he catered for the amusement of the parterre at the Petit Bourbon during the interval. M. Bazin somewhat flauntingly asserts that doubtless he repeated the 'divertissemens,' or farces, with which he had entertained the provinces, and made his *début* at Court—an assertion shown to be false (we owe the fact to M. Taschereau's kindness) by the *Régistre de Lagrange*, a highly valuable record of the accounts &c. of Molière's troupe, from the pen of Molière's principal actor, and now deposited among the manuscripts of the *Comédie Française*. We are forced, then, to pass, *per saltum*, from November, 1658, to November, 1659, when the first representation of the *Précieuses Ridicules* taught the world to know, as by instinct, that yet greater things were in store for them—that a new era was opened in the history of comedy. 'Courage! courage! Molière, voilà la vraie comédie.' This greeting, with which Molière was hailed from the parterre, has been heartily responded to by every succeeding generation.

Sir Walter Scott endeavoured to console himself for the comparative failure of the *Monastery*, and especially of the delineation of the euphuist, Sir Percie Shafton, by reflecting that satirists of folly cease to attract when the particular folly aimed at is no longer on the wing; so that plays, for instance, fall into oblivion along with the peculiar absurdities and extravagances against which their ridicule was originally directed. Not such, assuredly, has been the fate of the *Précieuses Ridicules;* and we fear it is rather in the execution than the conception, that the author of *Waverley* should have searched for the cause of that coldness with which the euphuist knight was received. With regard to the particular folly aimed at by Molière (it might be called the euphuism of

France), a great deal of misconception might have been obviated, if persons had taken the play on Molière's own showing, or had even attended to the important qualification involved in the title: not, observe, *Les Précieuses*, but *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. Finding that some one had got a copy of his play by stealth, and was on the point of bringing it out, Molière had no alternative but to anticipate or prosecute the pirate. Of the two evils he chose what he thought to be the lesser; and thus gave to the *Précieuses Ridicules* an honour he had withheld from the *Étourdi* and the *Dépit*, to wit, publication. The preface, in which he bewails this dire necessity of rushing, *nolens volens*, into print, is full of dry humour.

Oh Lord! (he exclaims), what a strange to-do it is, bringing out a book, and what a novice an author is, the first time he prints. If they had only given me time, I should have been better able to look about me, and could have taken all the precautions which Messieurs les auteurs—my colleagues, I may now call them—are wont to adopt on these occasions. I should have begun by pouncing upon some grandee as a patron, will he nill he, working upon his liberality by a flowery letter of dedication. I should then have tried my hand at a fine, learned preface, having plenty of books which would have supplied me with all sorts of learned things about Tragedy and Comedy, their etymology, definition, origin, and the rest of it. Aye! and I should have laid hold of some friends who, to give the piece a lift, would not have grudged me some verses in French or Latin: I have actually got some who would have praised me in Greek, and everyone knows that a bit of Greek praise produces a wonderful effect at the head of a book.

Molière then goes on to explain his motive in the choice of his subject. Things the most excellent, he says, are liable to be badly aped by persons who deserve to be shown up. After some illustrations, he adds, 'aussi les veritables précieuses auraient tort de se piquer lorsqu'on joue les ridicules qui les imitent mal.' The popular idea of the *Précieuses Ridicules* is, that it is intended as a satire upon the Hôtel de Rambouillet, that famous 'réunion,' which numbered on its rolls names the most illustrious for wit, birth, and virtue, that can be found among the sons and daughters of France during the seventeenth century. A few words of explanation, based on historical facts, will serve to show the exaggeration involved in this popular fallacy. We must premise, however, that we would not be understood to subscribe to the equally exaggerated reactionary movement directed against Molière's play by M. Roederer, the author of the *Histoire de la Société Polie*.

To find the cradle of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, we must go back to the first decade (1600—1610) of the century, which

witnessed the marriages of Henry IV. with Marie de Medicis, and of Charles d'Angennes, Marquis de Rambouillet, with de Catherine de Vivonne, daughter of the Marquis de Pisani. The motive which originated the Hôtel de Rambouillet, which formed in the world of fashion a kind of *imperium in imperio*, set up against the Court, was the disgust of Catherine de Vivonne at the lewdness of Henry IV. and his licentious crew, especially his persecution of her father's old pupil, the Prince de Condé, for whose wife (Marie de Montmorency) Henry did everything in his power to gratify his passion. Commenced as a protest against these dissolute excesses of King and Court, the Hôtel de Rambouillet ended by becoming a focus of which the lustre has not yet grown dim. Men of letters—the intellect of the head, accomplished women—the intellect of the heart, men of rank—the intellect of birth, (for, as Labruyère says of these 'fils des Dieux,' 'ils naissent instruits'); such were the elements of which this society was composed, such were the persons who met in the *salon bleu* of Madame de Rambouillet. It was there (to take it from the commencement) that Malherbe wedded energy of conception to elegance of execution—Malherbe, who shrewdly saw that the language of the simple should be a law to the wise—who in France was the first to invent a theory of style, and to vindicate the supremacy of order and of taste. There, too, Balzac shone—the Malherbe of prose—Balzac, who invented something more than the *word* 'urbanité,' and who gave to speech—that drapery of thought—many of those rich, ample folds which were hereafter to shroud the eloquence of a Pascal and a Bossuet. Nor must Voiture be forgotten—'le père de l'ingénieuse badinerie,' as a contemporary styles him; a man who was the idol of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, the spoiled child of the age in which he lived; who seems to have made it his aim to combine a maximum of words with a minimum of meaning, and the fame of whose writings would be totally inexplicable, did we not call to mind that he was the first to restore to French literature what Frenchmen so dearly love—'esprit,'—and thus supplied a welcome relief from the solemn pedantry of the sixteenth century.* Space will not admit of our continuing this enumeration of the members who flocked to the 'salons' of Madame de Rambouillet. Indeed, there is one name which may well compensate for all the rest. For what are Ménage and Scudéri,

* Perhaps the best criticism ever passed upon Voiture was the remark of a girl of twelve years of age, Mademoiselle de Bourbon, who said she thought "qu'il fallait le conserver dans du sucre."

Chapelain and Conrart, or even De Retz, when compared with 'le grand Corneille.' Misplaced, most assuredly, are flouts and sneers, when directed against a 'réunion' where Corneille read his plays, and, we might add, where Bossuet preached his maiden sermon.* Or, to pass to the other sex, is it in such women as Madame de Sévigné, de Longueville, de Sablé, de Scudéri, that we are to look for the originals of the *Précieuses Ridicules?* Perhaps the name last mentioned may inspire some one with the audacity to reply in the affirmative. The authoress of the *Grand Cyrus* and the *Clélie* has been the object of such withering contempt, especially from those who would feel affronted if you suspected them capable of ever having read a line of her works, that she may possibly be considered a fit object for Molière's shafts. On the merit of these novels it would be highly flippant to pronounce in some dozen words—all we could now spare. We content ourselves with meeting the main charge brought against them, that of a nauseous, namby-pamby gallantry, by replying, that of the two, we consider the metaphysics of love a trifle less dangerous than the physics thereof, and that Mademoiselle de Scudéri—and, before her, d'Urfé, the author of *Astrée*—compassed no frivolous end, when, by way of protest against the coarse sensuality of a licentious court, they set themselves to trace pictures of love which could be witnessed without a blush, and dialogues between the sexes which could be written without asterisks. It must further be remembered that you lose the whole point of Molière's play—his *précieuses* cease to be *ridicules*—if you let go the fact, that what they take in earnest, with the '*véritables* précieuses' was a mere wanton play of wit and words, absurd if you will, but admitted to be so by those who first gave them currency. In its original acceptation, the word *précieuse* was an honourable designation, signifying a woman who, to grace and dignity of manner, added elegance and culture of mind, and who in every way answered to the ideal which we are wont to form of the well-born and well-bred daughter of Eve—pure and high-toned feeling, incarnate in simplicity of language and dignity of bearing. But when the Hôtel de Rambouillet came to be broken up, from death, and marriage, and such like catastrophes in the family of its founders, a number of other 'cercles' sprang into existence, who idly fancied that elevation of language could disguise the absence of elevation of feeling;

* See Bungener's tracts on the Hôtel de Rambouillet appended to his *Sermon sous Louis XIV.* The circumstances on which they are founded are authentic facts.

that the millinery of words could compensate for good substantial thought. We do not exaggerate when we say that it would be as ludicrous to take Thackeray's *Book of Snobs* for a true picture of the English gentleman, as for us to represent Molière's *Précieuses Ridicules* as a true delineation of the Sevignés, the Sablés, and the Longuevilles of France in the seventeenth century. We might go further, and sum up our brief sketch of the *véritables Précieuses*, by expressing our convictions that to the 'réunions' of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, as much as, if not more than to the exertions of Richelieu, France is indebted for the origin of her Academy. We need but look at the earliest orations delivered by the members of that world-famous body (who were also frequenters of the Hôtel de Rambouillet), in order to see the analogy between the topics which engaged the attention of both assemblies. In his recent and charming biography of Madame de Longueville, M. Cousin compares the tone of conversation which we may believe to have prevailed during the palmy days (1630—1648) of the Hôtel de Rambouillet to that of Plato's Symposium, or more generally, to that of the cultured minds that flocked around Aspasia at Athens, or hung upon the lips of the Scipios at Rome. That we should be able to quote such a name as M. Cousin's on our side is a sufficient guarantee that we have been justified in vindicating the claims of the Hôtel de Rambouillet to the position it deserves to occupy, as one of the most salutary instruments in the development of French literature. We now proceed to a closer examination of Molière's play.

Enter a brace of rejected lovers, whose homely ways have not found favour with Mesdemoiselles Madelon and Cathos, the nieces of an honest, simple-minded bourgeois, Gorgibus. They are bent on revenge. The execution of their plan forms the subject of the play. This, like all Molière's plots, is very simple. Their two valets pass themselves off as marquises, and after making dupes of the *précieuses*, are detected by their masters, who drub the pseudo-nobles out of the house, greatly to the mortification of the young *précieuses*, now doubly *ridicules*. The contrast between the plain-spoken uncle and the affectation of his nieces gives wonderful relief to the comic effect of the play. When asked how it came to pass that the two suitors had left the house so coldly, Madelon replies, 'La belle galanterie que la leur! Quoi! débuter d'abord par le mariage!!' 'Eh!! par où veux tu donc qu'ils débutent? par le concubinage?' Here follows a long remonstrance from the nieces, who describe in detail the forms and ceremonies to be adopted by wooers—the 'carte du Tendre,' and the rest of it.

We repeat it, critics ought to have seen that it is in this serious, matter-of-fact aspect, under which the nieces regard all the whimsical vagaries and conceits of the *Clélie*, that their 'ridicule' consists. The best scene of all is, of course, that where Mascarille, the valet, under the assumed character of marquis, draws out all the absurdities of the *Précieuses*. He is soon joined by his accomplice, a pseudo-viscount. They cry one another up in the most extravagant fashion. Witness the following: 'Do you remember that half-moon which we carried at the siege of Arras?' 'Half-moon, indeed,' replies the other; 'what are you talking about? it was a whole one, and no mistake.' The joke is historical, being related of the Marquis de Nesle, Governor of La Fére; 'Gentlemen!' said he, when some one proposed constructing a half-moon, 'do not let us do anything by halves for the service of the King—let us make a whole one.' (*Tallemant des Réaux*, v. p. 203—written in 1658, a year before the *Précieuses Ridicules* was acted; not published, however, till nearly two centuries later.)

Perhaps it may be worth mentioning, that the only free-born girl (the rest are foundlings, slaves, or worse) whom Plautus has introduced upon the stage, may be considered a Roman 'précieuse ridicule.' We suppose Plautus found it necessary to relieve the dulness of her morality by a touch of the ridiculous. Hearken to her as she answers the question, whether she likes the ramparts at Athens?—

Si íncolæ bene súnt morati, púlcre mœnitum árbitror,
Pérfidia, et peculátus ex urbe, ét avaritia, si éxulant,
Quárta invidia, quínta ambitio, séxta autem obtrectátio,
Septimum perjurium' ('Euge!' exclaims a bystander), 'octava indiligéntia,
Nóna injuria, éxtumum quod péssumum adgressúst scelus,
Haéc unde aberunt, sána et salva sát erit semper cívitas.

We should think Sagaristio would take care not to broach ramparts again in a hurry.

Not quite a year after the production of the *Précieuses Ridicules*, Molière's theatre at the Salle de Bourbon was pulled down to make room for the extension of the Louvre. In the interval, the only play which he gave the public—*Sganarelle; ou, le Cocu Imaginaire*—met with a success more than commensurable with its merits. It was acted forty times in succession—beginning May 28, 1660.

The commencement of the following year found Molière installed in his new theatre—the Salle du Palais Royal. The associations connected with its past history (for there the *Cid* and *Les Horaces* had been acted), appear to have betrayed him

from his allegiance to Thalia into a momentary worship of Melpomene. Aristodemus, one of the guests in Plato's Symposium, who did not go home till daylight did appear, informs us that when he woke up from a snooze he found Socrates engaged in extorting an admission from those two masters of tragedy and comedy respectively, to wit, Agathon and Aristophanes, that one and the same man ought to know how to write tragedies and comedies alike, and that one who was a skilful tragedian, was, *ipso facto*, a master of comedy as well. The theory is in such flat contradiction with what is put into the mouth of Socrates elsewhere (*Rep.* 395), that we are at first inclined to suspect that Socrates was either suffering himself from the effects of the Symposium, or else was taking an unfair advantage over the impaired faculties of the two poets, by trying to persuade them that, boast they never so highly of their respective supremacy, to write tragedies and comedies was all one, the difficulties equal, the glory the same. Your Schlegels and Schleiermachers, however, scared by the prospect of a joke, bring up to the rescue a third passage (*Laws*, vii.), which goes to show that things are only known by their contraries (*ἄνευ γὰρ γελοίων τὰ σπουδαῖα, καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐναντίων τὰ ἐναντία μαθεῖν οὐ δυνατὸν*). Here, however, Plato is not speaking of writers, but of spectators of the drama, and we think it is of doubtful advantage to explain one passage by another, where the substance of the argument or statement is materially different. Much, however, as we differ from the aforesaid Schlegels and Schleiermachers, we should hesitate to go the length of Racine, who approves of the reluctance with which the two poets yielded the point, by adding a note to this part of his translation of the Symposium —'C'est en effet un sophisme indigne de Socrate, et que l'expérience seule réfute, sans le sécours du raisonnement.' At any rate, certain it is, that great as may be Molière's claims to the glory of a French Aristophanes, Agathon need not make himself the least uneasy about being eclipsed by the author of *Don Garcie de Navarre; ou, le Prince Jaloux*. So coldly was it received, that in a few days Molière withdrew it; reserving to himself the right, hereafter, of transferring some lines from it to the *Misanthrope*.

The clouds which had for a moment dimmed Molière's glory, on the failure of the *Prince Jaloux*, were soon dispersed by the *École des Maris*, a comedy in three acts, and in verse, acted at the Palais Royal on June 24th, 1661. This date reminds us that we have now traversed well nigh forty years of Molière's life. M. Bazin justly and shrewdly observes, that in this year, 1661, an event took place of which the influence on

Molière's career can scarcely be overrated. The death of Cardinal Mazarin (March 9th), which left Louis without a minister, placed the author-actor face to face with a king who was resolved that, from henceforth, there should be no mediator between him and his people. It is not too much to say that Molière is now fairly launched on his voyage to that haven of fame, about which float the shattered spars of many a luckless craft. It is not our purpose to overhaul his log with great minuteness, or to drop metaphor, instead of attempting to do over again what Sir Walter Scott has already done in an essay above referred to, *scilicet*, a very exact, but not very lively catalogue raisonné of each and every play in succession, we hold it better to abide by the adage, 'Non multa sed multum,' and to pick out, for more detailed and special consideration, some of the great standard pieces by which Molière's name will for ever live; following herein the practice of every prudent tourist, who, if his route lie through a country teeming with attractions, knows it is hopeless to see everything, and resolutely confines himself to some few objects of which the interest is paramount and supreme.

Admirable, no doubt, is the *École des Maris;* interesting to the student of dramatic literature are the points of contact and of difference which it offers when contrasted with the *Adelphi* of the sententious Terence, or the piquant tales of the Decameron; interesting from a different point of view, that is, from the occasion for which it was composed, is the series of detached scenes in the *Fâcheux*, a play which is bound up with the fate and fortunes of Fouquet, having been acted at that famous fête at Vaux, which, while it displayed the opulence of a man whose guests were crowned, did but hasten and herald his downfall: a host in August, in September the tenant of a dungeon. It is not, however, by the *École des Maris* or the *Fâcheux* (the latter you might call the *Ibam forte viâ sacrâ* dramatised) that Molière has become the master of his art;—so that we feel compelled to hasten on to better things. On the road we must not omit to notice an event, the importance of which on the domestic happiness of our author must be attributed rather to the fictions of calumny than to the facts of infidelity. On the 20th of February, 1662, two days after the *publication* of the *Fâcheux*, Molière married Armande Béjart, a sister of Madeleine Béjart, the actress with reference to whom an extract has been quoted in these pages from Tallemant des Réaux. To this fact legal documents, which had escaped detection till 1821, bear unequivocal testimony. It is curious that M. Bazin, with all his horror of crazy hypotheses, should have ventured to countenance an ugly and loathsome

slander, which represented Molière's wife to be the daughter, and not the sister, of Molière's mistress. This gratuitous concession to the pertinacious importunities of calumny is unworthy of any right-thinking person. That a man of forty should marry a girl not quite seventeen years of age was of itself sufficient to give a handle to scandal-mongers, due regard being had to the social position of the wife; for in no case is a woman more exposed to the wanton malice of lying tongues than when she adds to the frailties of her sex the peculiar dangers of the stage. The three plays which succeeded the *Fâcheux*, namely, the *École des Femmes* (December 26th, 1662), the *Critique de l'École des Femmes* (January 5th, 1663), and the *Impromptu de Versailles* (October, 1663), aggravated a hundredfold the ill-natured inuendos to which his own imprudence furnished a pretext, however flimsy. In the first of these plays he aroused the suspicions and kindled the animosity of the pseudo-religious party, or French Puritans of Paris, who chose to consider that the lecture on connubial life, administered by Arnoulphe to his young betrothed, Agnes (who, like many other characters of Molière's creation, has passed into a proverb as a type of ingenuous *naïveté*), was a parody of things sacred—an accusation which Molière's quondam patron, the Prince de Conti, did not scruple to endorse. In the second he drove home the satire, which he had left in a vague and impersonal shape in the first; while in the third he drew down upon himself a hornet's nest of unscrupulous enemies, by a cutting and merciless exposure of the 'troupe' at the Hôtel de Bourgogne. For a long time, envy, jealousy, and even hatred, had been seething and simmering in the breasts of the rivals whom he eclipsed. These now boiled over. Montfleuri, one of his principal rivals, who seems to have discharged the functions of liar-general, tried to make himself heard at court. Louis XIV., with a dignity truly royal, showed his appreciation of the slander and his contempt for its author in a manner best calculated to refute the one and confound the other. It was towards the end of 1663 that Montfleuri had alleged, in a document submitted to the King, that Molière's death would leave his wife fatherless and a widow in one; it was in February, 1664, that Louis XIV. and Henrietta of England, Duchess of Orleans, condescended to be the sponsors of Molière's child.* This gracious act, we should

* Of Molière's three children, born in 1664, 1665, and 1672, respectively, only one—the second—survived him. The other two died in childhood. The survivor, a daughter, eloped with a widower in 1685, twelve years after Molière's death. She died, however, in 1723, without leaving any issue.

observe, had been preceded by one of a more substantial kind, which placed 'cet excellent poëte comique' on the list of crown pensions to the tune of 'mille livres' (40*l.*). It would have been well if the frowns of the King had stopped the circulation of these foul fictions. Unfortunately, among the worthless trash which fell from the press, in Germany and elsewhere, after the Protestant emigration of 1685, there appeared at Frankfort (1688) a book in which venom had served for ink, and bearing the title of *La Fameuse Comédienne; ou, Histoire de la Guerin*, such being the name of Madame Molière's second husband. It was filled with all the nastiness which is to be found in the slums of a theatre. Prodigal of indecency, it won the sympathies of Bayle (s. v. Poquelin), and has since become the repertory from which writers on Molière have borrowed a host of stories about the infidelities of Molière's wife and the miseries of Molière's home, to which no place will be assigned in these pages, the writer believing, with M. Bazin, that the main links in the evidence are so rotten that they cannot bear any stress being laid on them, and that the whole book is nothing but the produce of an exceedingly bestial imagination, kindled by feelings of deep personal malignity towards a 'comédienne,' who, although she might not have been 'fameuse' as an exemplar of conjugal propriety, was certainly not infamous to the extent implied by this anonymous slanderer.

And now, reader, we invite you to partake of the 'pleasures of the enchanted Isle,'

> questa Isola bella
> Di cui gran parte Alcina ti possede.—*Orlando Furioso*, vii.

Yes! you must rub up your Ariosto, if you would gaze with an understanding eye upon those fairy scenes which made the 'merrie' month of May, 1664, one of the most joyous and brilliant in the annals of Versailles. Little did the author of the *Orlando Furioso* imagine, as he traced the adventures of 'il paladin Ruggiero,' when exposed to the dangerous fascinations of Alcina, a second Circe, that the monarch who most united in his own person all the ideas which men attach to royal pomp and circumstance would one day put into action what the poet had put into verse, and show himself to six hundred of the mightiest nobles and dames of France—a living impersonation of the bold Count Roger. 'Jamais un air plus libre, ni plus guerrier, n'a mis un mortel au dessus des autres hommes:' so wrote a contemporary and a witness of the scene. Truly, it must have been a most glorious week,—the spectators yet more brilliant than the spectacle! Think of every name

most famous in the young King's court, and you may reckon upon finding its owner in yon gorgeous throng. Forget all the misery and penury which filled the length and breadth of France with haggard frames and harrowed hearts, and you would not scruple to pronounce the host of such a mirthful revelry a great king and a good. And yet it was there—before a whole legion of the greatest and choicest in the land, who for six days had given a loose to all the wild fancies of ancient mythology, and the yet wilder conceits of knightly romance—it was there, after the Four Seasons and the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac had executed a ballet, and Summer had taken an airing in the park on elephant-back!—yes, reader, it was there that the curtain rose, and displayed in succession Madame Pernelle, Orgon, and Tartuffe. You smile, perhaps, incredulous. Read, then, the following extract from what may be called the official report of the fête:—*

Le soir sa Majesté fit jouer les trois premiers actes d'une comédie, nommée *Tartuffe*, que le Sieur Molière avait faite contre les hypocrites, mais quoiqu'elle eût été trouvée fort divertissante, le roi connut tant la conformité entre ceux qu'une véritable dévotion met dans le chemin du ciel, et ceux qu'une bonne ostentation de bonnes œuvres, n'empêche pas d'en commettre de mauvaises, que son extrême délicatesse pour les choses de la religion, eut de la peine à souffrir cette resemblance du vice avec la vertu; et quoiqu'on ne doutât point des bonnes intentions de l'auteur, il défendit cette comédie pour le public, jusqu'à ce qu'elle fût entièrement achevée, et examinée par des gens capables d'en juger, pour n'en pas laisser abuser à d'autres, moins capables d'en faire un juste discernement.

We can easily conceive, even though history has not informed us of it in so many words, what an extraordinary sensation this event must have produced. At Versailles, indeed, it was found 'fort divertissante,' but not so at Paris. Court and town were often divided. Town and crown rows were as frequent occurrences then as now. On this head we are not left altogether without testimony, for though Clio be mute, her maid-of-all-work, a sort of newspaper of the day, contained the following on the 24th of May:—

De la cour un quidam m'écrit,
Et ce quidam a bon esprit,

* The *Fêtes de Versailles*, which lasted seven days, were considered so unique of their kind, that in the same year an account of them was published 'by authority.' It has all the precision, and not quite all the dulness of a court circular. We there find that Molière and Co contributed to the gaieties of the occasion on four days out of seven.

Que le comédien Molière
Dont la muse n'est point anière
Avait fait quelque plainte au roi,
Sans m'expliquer trop bien pourquoi:
Sinon que sur son *Hypocrite*,
Pièce, dit-on, de grand mérite,
Et très fort au gré de la cour
Maint censeur daube nuit et jour, &c.

The writer goes on to say 'that Molière was doing everything in his power to hold his ground, with what success remained to be seen.' For us this mystery is solved: the extract quoted above, from the *Fêtes de Versailles*, warrants the inference that the King deemed it prudent to allay the excited feelings of Paris Puritans by forbidding any public representation of the play. Of course this ban only served to stimulate curiosity. '*Le Tartuffe*,' says Boileau, 'en ce temps avait été défendu, et tout le monde voulait avoir Molière, pour le lui entendre reciter.'* Accordingly we find that in July, September, and November respectively, the play (then completed; for at Versailles only the three first acts had been represented) was either acted with great applause, or read, at Fontainebleau (in the presence, and with the approval, of the *Papal legate*), at Villars Cotteret, where Louis was a guest of his brother, and at Râincy 'chez le Prince de Condé.' Nor was it only the fascination of forbidden fruits which gave rise to this 'fureur.' Of the two parties into which the religious world of France was then divided, Jansenists and Jesuits, the former were particularly obnoxious to the King, whose lax, not to say libertine, life, was little in consonance with the austere, unbending morality of the apostles of Port Royal: on that austerity the King persuaded himself that *Tartuffe* was a well-merited satire. It was this feeling of sympathy with Molière at Versailles which roused such a spirit of antagonism at Paris, the stronghold of Jansenism. How was this opposition to be disarmed? Why, by setting afloat the notion that the *Tartuffe* was but a postscript to the *Provinciales* of Pascal, and that Jesuits, not Jansenists, were in reality the object of attack. 'On vous avait dit,' wrote Racine to a Jansenist, 'que les Jésuites etaient joués dans de cette comédie: les Jésuites, au contraire, se flattaient qu'on en voulait aux Jansénistes.' In the *Critique de l'École des Femmes* Molière wittily observes that comedies are

* These words form a note on this line of Boileau's third satire:

Molière avec *Tartuffe* y doit jouer son rôle.

As much as to say, 'So you surely will not refuse my invitation.'

mirrors, in which people should never let out that they see their own likeness. True, but that is a very different thing from seeing your neighbour's likeness. Other causes might be mentioned (exclusive, of course, of the intrinsic merits of the play) which tended to increase the sensation produced by the *Tartuffe;* but not the least interesting, assuredly, is the naïveté with which Jansenist and Jesuit chuckled as each fancied that the other was the object of attack. This kind of popularity, however, was not enough to satisfy Molière's heart. As an 'ami du peuple' he longed for the rude, but honest applause of a Parisian audience at the Palais Royal, and was proportionately galled at the prohibition which had been placed upon him. Truly he had his revenge! 'You call me atheist, libertine, and blasphemer; (we can fancy him saying) I will show you what my idea of such a character is; whether I resemble him, judge ye.' Animated by this spirit, Molière wrote *Don Juan; ou, le festin de pierre.* To serve up a dare-devil libertine *au naturel* on the stage was a thing which required delicate cooking. It was not the first, still less was it the last time, the attempt had been made. A subject on which Tirso de Molina, Molière, Mozart, and Byron, have exercised their genius, cannot be unworthy of some elucidation. Especially as we believe the French play to be one of the most masterly productions which its author has achieved: its rich ample prose is worthy of Pascal, and as a play it is second only to *Tartuffe* and the *Misanthrope. Sed hæc hactenus.*

In the year 1850, a young Spaniard, on whom Nature had been prodigal of her choicest gifts, presented himself at the 'Bibliothéque du Roi,'—we beg pardon—'Nationale'—we beg pardon again—'Impériale,'—to inquire for the third part of a very scarce Spanish peerage, (*Nobleza di Andalusia, en Sevilla,* 1588,) in which he hoped to find some details promised by the author respecting the history of his ancestors. It was no futile subject of research; for through the mists which hung about the cradle of his race there stands out the world-famous hero, type of licentious love—Don Juan de Tenorio. This individual has shared the fate of many semi-mythical personages, by being split up into several. The chronicles of Seville, for example, speak of him as Don Juan de Tenorio; those of Granada, as Don Juan d'Albarren: in both towns the *popular* legend styles him Don Juan de Marana, while Bernal Diaz gives him the surname of Salazar.* As far as we are

* Gomara, chaplain to Fernando Cortez, speaks of him as Don Juan de Salamanca; obviously a university sobriquet: probably the only 'honour' that the young gentleman carried off.

able to determine, all these titles indicate one and the same man: Tenorio and Salazar being paternal and maternal names respectively, Albarren that of a seignorial property, and Marana that of a district or county. This hypothesis amply accounts for the decomposition, as it were, which tradition has effected. The local habitation of the legend may be placed at the monastery of San Francisco at Seville, the ruins of which are still to be seen in Catalanos Street. Within its sacred precincts were erected a tomb and statue, in memory of the Commandeur d'Ulloa, whom the aforesaid Don Juan murdered, after seducing the daughter. The story goes on to state that the monks of San Francisco were so scandalized at this and other like excesses on the part of Don Juan, whose illustrious birth enabled him to evade the penalties of the law, that they enticed him into their premises, from whence he never after emerged! The report was circulated that Don Juan had made his way into the monastery for the purpose of insulting the Commandeur's statue, and that the said statue had resented the affront, by dragging the offender down into Hell: a *dénouement* which Byron believed to be merely allegorical for marriage. *Judicent peritiores.*

Such was the legend, accompanied, no doubt, by tales of the particular excesses which drew down such severe chastisement, on which a Spanish monk, Gabriel Tellez,* better known by the pseudonym of Tirso de Molina, erected one of the most remarkable plays in the dramatic literature of Spain. The churches of that country had indeed previously witnessed the representation of a 'mystery,' or auto-sacramentalë, called the '*Ateista fulminado.*' This, however, was probably a very bald affair, when compared with '*El Burlador y Combidado di Pietra, Comedia famosa del Maestro Tirso de Molina.* 1620.' We may here note, in passing, a curious blunder of the French translation of the title. It was first known in France in an Italian dress: '*Il convitato di pietra,*' (a verse rendering of a prose comedy by Giliberti, acted at Naples, 1652), having been acted by the Italian 'troupe' of the Petit Bourbon in 1657. In the following year Dorimon, an actor of some repute, brought it out at Lyons, under the title of '*Le festin de pierre;*

* Ochoa, a good authority, places his birth at about 1570, seven years after Lope de Vega, and thirty before Calderon. He was monk of the order of La Merci, and became prior of the monastery of Soria about three years before his death (1648). Sixty—all that were extant —of the five hundred plays he wrote were collected together, and published for the first time in 1846. It may be well to add, that in 1659 an excellent Spanish 'troupe' came to Paris, and chief among its repertory figured Tellez's *chef d'œuvre.*

*ou, le fils criminel.'** The blunder of translating 'convitato' by 'festin,' instead of by 'convié,' or 'guest,' would be unaccountable, were it not that in those days, the French word 'convive' meant 'a feast,' as well as 'a guest;' so that Dorimon probably confounded 'convitato' with 'convito.' In 1659, Villiers, an actor of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, Molière's rival, made a new translation, but retained the title. It is interesting to observe that the subject was one with which these frequent representations must have made the Parisians perfectly familiar. It seems probable, indeed, that it was from a reluctance to lessen in any way the fascination inherent in the very title of the play, which induced Molière, in his turn, not to depart from the practice which the blunder of his predecessors had rendered popular. Molière's prose was couched in words that burn. The younger Corneille cooled it down by putting it into very chilling verse. It is a fact which redounds but little to the honour of Molière's countrymen that it was not till the year 1847, on the anniversary of the author's birth, that the Comédie Française (following herein the example set by the Odéon in 1841,) restored Molière's play to the position from which it had been ousted ever since 1677, and at the same time repaired the blunder already alluded to, by the somewhat strong measure of amputating the second member of the title.

Half animal, half angel, man is capable of two kinds of amorous passion. He may be voluptuous, without love; or he may love, without being voluptuous; the slave of his appetites or the master. If once the motley and swinish crew which wait upon the bidding of that lower life of the senses, called Vice, succeed in escaping from yonder cavern beneath the diaphragm where one of old ensconced them, and thus traverse the isthmus of the neck, and gain the head, that strong acropolis where Reason reigns—oh! then, may God defend the right, else shall woe betide. Have a care, young gentleman!—there you are perched up aloft, reins in hand, proud of your new-fledged independence; have a care, I say, for look at your team: one indeed is in goodish condition, stands well on its legs, has good action, holds up its neck, its nostrils show breeding, its hide is spotless, its eye dark, its spirit high, without being intractable or restive; whip it wants none: say but a word, and it will do your bidding: but as to

* In Wetstein's edition of Molière, published at Amsterdam, at intervals, (the date of its completion is 1691), Dorimon's play is given as Molière's. The fraud was unpardonable, and stupid to boot, for Lagrange's edition had appeared, as the reader knows, in 1682.

the other, it is all askew and puffy, stands all of a heap, (this seems to be the meaning of the Greek εἰκῇ συμπεφορημένος), its neck has no slimness, its throat burly, its face flat, its hide ill-favoured; its eyes, white where they are not bloodshot, bent upon mischief, and self-willed, its ears all hair and dull of hearing, not over mindful of whip and lash. These are but sorry yoke-fellows; and if that ugly brute takes to jibbing, you may end by sticking fast in the deep mire, or floundering in the beastly sinks of sensuality. Which things are an allegory; and it is curious how the order of ideas which we have here endeavoured to place before the reader has been translated into action, into music, and into verse, by dramatists, composers, and poets in turn, with Don Juan as a hero and a theme. It is curious to observe, on the one hand, the pious caution with which the Spaniard shrank from unmasking the libertine, and showing the atheist in the broad face of heaven, and on the brink of hell; on the other hand, the boldness with which Molière tore aside every disguise; or again, the subtlety, we might call it the sophistry, with which the nineteenth century —witness Hoffman's remarkable rhapsody on Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, and Alfred de Musset's metaphysics of Lust in the first canto of *Namouna*—characteristically sublimates the bestiality of a coarse libertine into a kind of mystical aspiration after the Infinite, an impatience on the part of the soul (soul indeed!!) to escape from its prison-house of flesh.

Nor is the shrinking from the exposure of an arrant atheist the only contrast which separates the play of Tirso de Molina from that of Molière. The Spanish play teems with horror: the more so on account of the occasional touches of remorse and of religious awe with which Don Juan is, if not scared, yet disturbed, in the midst of his hellish career. Molière, on the other hand, has carefully abstained from quitting the region of Comedy. Never are the skirts of 'gorgeous Tragedy in sceptered pall' allowed to show themselves. In all that he has added to, or taken away from *El Burlador di Sevilla*, he has been guided by a wish to heighten the comic, and diminish the tragic effect. For example, the exquisite scene between the two rustic coquettes and Don Juan, the still more ludicrous interview of the young rake with his tradesman, M. Dimanche,—these are, both of them, Molière's own. Then again, in the Spanish play, the Commandeur d'Ulloa, whose statue plays such an important part in the *dramatis personæ*, is murdered by Don Juan on the stage. Whereas with Molière, this tragic event is among 'the things that were:' and this not merely because murders are not particularly funny. The miracle of a moving statue was more of an anachronism in the France of the seven-

teenth than in the Spain of the sixteenth century. Accordingly, Molière, with consummate art, keeps this personage as much as possible in the background: taking care, meanwhile, so to work upon his audience by a series of pictures of reckless libertinism and blasphemy, that at last it seems quite in the order of nature that his hero should be miraculously dragged to hell. Once, and once only, does Molière furnish a glimpse of that secret terror of an Unknown Hereafter, which makes cowards of us all. He and his valet, Sganarelle, come upon a monument which they find upon inquiry to be the tomb and statue of the Commandeur d'Ulloa, Don Juan's victim. 'Demande lui, s'il veut venir souper avec moi,' he says to Sganarelle, in wanton levity. In reply, the statue nods its head. Don Juan is incredulous: to convince at once and to convict his terrified valet, he puts the invitation himself: again the statue nods acquiescence. 'Hé bien! Monsieur, hé bien!' triumphantly exclaims Sganarelle.—*Don Juan.* 'Allons, sortons d'ici.'—*Sganarelle* (*seul*). 'Voilà de mes esprits forts qui ne veulent rien croire!'

From what has been said on the comic effect of the *Don Juan*, it must not be supposed that Molière has made an incorrigible reprobate laughable and amusing (though, after all, it is less dangerous to be seduced into laughing *at* a villain than *with* him). No! he has here shown the same skill, not to say genius, as in the *Tartuffe*. While hypocrite and libertine are depicted in all their unvarnished truth, it is in the secondary and subordinate characters that the comic element is made to reside: thus affording admirable relief to those very qualities which are intended to elicit the frowns rather than the smiles of the audience. Thus, in the play before us, the *naïveté* of the simple-minded Sganarelle, ever halting between the fear of being drubbed by his master and the far deeper horror of abetting or witnessing his crimes, brings out most forcibly the dreadful profligacy of Don Juan; *so* dreadful that even a valet—a race whom the stage had proverbed for knavery—is scared into a sense of decorum. Sganarelle is to Don Juan what Sancho Panza is to Don Quixote: Cervantes, be it said in passing, having shown the same art as Molière in using the machinery of contrast. In both cases, it is scarcely too much to say that the valet supplants the master in the reader's mind: and it is well that it is so, for were the master to be pushed obtrusively to the fore, Don Juan might become interesting, which would be dangerous, and Don Quixote would cease to be interesting, which would be dull. Mark, too, the quiet, unpretending manner in which Molière makes use of Sganarelle to promote the interests of true religion by

giving here and there a rap on the knuckles to those 'petits impertinents dans le monde qui sont libertins sans savoir pourquoi, qui font les esprits forts, parce qu'il croient que cela leur sied bien,' (Act i., sc. 2). It was Sganarelle that Molière acted, that Samson acts at the Comédie Française: a treat, good reader, which we strongly recommend thee not to deny thyself, should occasion offer.

One word more, ere we quit a play of which we are more enamoured every time we read it. An atheist and a libertine —one thing only was lacking to fill up the measure of Don Juan's iniquity. He must add to his vices hypocrisy. Read the second scene of the last act, and see with what withering, pungent sarcasm Molière turns round upon those whose machinations had compassed the suppression of *Tartuffe*, and with sharp outline, broad touches, and bold colouring, draws to the life a portrait of hypocrisy with such matchless power, that it has become a κτῆμα ἐς ἀεί, unequalled, much less surpassed in any living literature, and as applicable to the nineteenth as to the seventeenth century. Is there anything antiquated, anything *à la Louis Quatorze*—would there were —in the following plan of operations, which Don Juan lays down for himself as a hypocrite *in futuro?*

Je m'érigerai en censeur des actions d'autrui, jugerai mal de tout le monde, et n'aurai bonne opinion que de moi. Dès qu'une fois on m'aura choqué tant soit peu, je ne pardonnerai jamais, et garderai tout doucement (that *tout doucement* is sublime) une haine irréconciliable. Je ferai le vengeur des intérêts du ciel, et sous ce prétexte commode, je pousserai mes ennemis, je les accuserai d'impiété, et saurai déchaîner contre eux des zélés indiscrets, qui sans connoissance de cause, crieront en public contre eux, qui les accableront d'injures, et les damneront hautement de leur autorité privée.

It was in February that *Don Juan* was acted. In the following August, the King 'pria son frère de lui céder ses comédiens, leur assura une pension de 7000 livres, et la Troupe de Monsieur devint la 'Troupe du Roi,' ce qui n'empêcha pas celle de l'Hôtel de Bourgogne de continuer à s'appeler 'la Troupe Royale.' In September he produced, at Versailles, *L'Amour Médecin*, a piece which well deserves the epithet of 'impromptu' applied to it in the preface by Molière, having been invented, composed, learned, and acted within five days. The story turns on a girl who shams illness because her father will not allow her to marry. It is in the first scene—where all sorts of suggestions are tendered for effecting a cure, among others, a present of jewellery—that those famous words occur, 'Vous êtes orfévre Monsieur Josse,' which have since become a

proverb. Ultimately the lover, disguised as a doctor, succeeds in effecting at once a union and a cure. M. Bazin suggests that in the fierce onset made in this play on the four leading doctors of the day, Molière was actuated by the moroseness not unnatural to a man whose own health was gradually giving way. The faculty would doubtless consider that the severe illness which nearly ended Molière's days, shortly after the representation of the *Amour Médecin*, was a condign retribution for his attack upon their craft.

This illness, combined with the death of the Queen-mother at the commencement of 1666, and the general mourning which ensued, seems to have caused a delay in Molière's productions; a delay, however, which was soon to be nobly repaired. On the 4th of June, 1666—a day to be remembered in the annals of the drama—the *Misanthrope* was first acted at the Palais Royal. So transcendent are its alleged merits in point of style, that we have met with no Frenchman, of cultivated taste, who does not pronounce it to be Molière's *chef d'œuvre*, the *facilè princeps* of his repertory. As to style, a native of course is a judge from whom it would be the height of presumption in a foreigner to appeal. On the other features of the play however, greater latitude of judgment may fairly be allowed. Frenchmen themselves have been among the first to claim and exercise the right. Divers and diverse, in truth, have been the vicissitudes through which this play has passed. Of these the most noteworthy is the vehement attack made against it by Jean Jacques Rousseau, in his memorable manifesto against plays, addressed to d'Alembert. He commences his denunciations against Molière (whom he honestly styles 'le plus parfait auteur comique dont les ouvrages nous soient connus') by characterizing his plays as an 'école de vices et mauvaises mœurs.' His argument then takes the following turn: if the *Misanthrope* 'qu'on reconnoit maintenant pour son chef-d'œuvre, ... qui est sans contredit, de toutes les comédies de Molière, celle qui contient la meilleure et la plus saine morale' —if even this play must be condemned as subversive of morality, then let the reader judge how the case must, *à fortiori*, stand with the rest of Molière's works. He then attempts to make good his charges against the *Misanthrope*, on the ground that an upright and virtuous man is there held up to ridicule. It does not fall in with our purpose to go over, in detail, the very lengthy criticism to which Rousseau subjects the play. Much less would we indulge in any sneers against the *Lettre des Spectacles* generally, forming, as it does, a stately portico to that more extensive monument which Rousseau has erected, *ære perennius*, in the *Émile*. We content ourselves

with stating that we believe Rousseau has altogether misapprehended Molière's purpose: and further, that you have only to read Fabre d'Eglantine's play, *le Philinte de Molière*, which ought to have been styled *le Philinte de Rousseau* (for the plot and characters are designed to carry out Rousseau's suggestions and ideas on what *le Misanthrope* ought to have been), in order to judge whether the cause of morality has found a more able advocate in the eighteenth than in the seventeenth century.

This misapprehension respecting the *Misanthrope* is not confined to Rousseau. The most ardent among its admirers, such as Geoffroy and Jules Janin, appear to us to have been equally wanting in discrimination. M. Jules Janin, for example (whose criticism, like champagne, should be taken when it is fizzing), entertained the readers of the *Débats*, last New-year's day, with a comparison between the *Timon* of Shakspeare and the *Alceste* of Molière, which went to show that the only difference between the two was, that while the language of the one was fit for Billingsgate, that of the other was not unfit for Belgravia; thus leaving out of the question altogether the totally different genus of misanthropy portrayed by the two poets. As this is a point of some considerable interest, we think it may be well to elucidate our meaning.

Plato tells us that misanthropy comes over a man in this wise:—You place implicit confidence in some one; you believe him to be, every inch of him, a good man, a faithful, and a true; shortly afterwards, you find out that he is a scoundrel unworthy of your confidence. So again, with some one else. When this happens to a man over and over again, and more especially at the hands of those whom he has all along taken to be his own familiar friends, these repeated occurrences end, as we all know, by making him hate everybody; and he fancies that there is no whole part in any human being. The corrective to this morbid moroseness is to be found, adds Plato, in the reflection, that whereas men unexceptionably good, and unexceptionably bad, are rarely to be met with, the middle sort form the great bulk of mankind. M. Aimé Martin, one of the most deserving of Molière's editors, looks upon this definition as the key to the character of Alceste. It is not without regret we feel compelled to affirm, that a grosser mistake has seldom been committed. When we hasten to add that this same definition portrays to the life the Timon of the bard of Avon, we do but point out the absurdity of which M. Janin has been guilty in putting the two plays upon the same footing. The mistake pointed out by Plato is precisely the rock on which Timon split. In fact, readers of Shakspeare

cannot fail to be struck with the almost verbal parallelism between the philosopher and the dramatist. One of the few truths which that cold hard cynic Apemantus addresses to Timon—'The middle of humanity thou never knewest, but the extremity of both ends,' coincides so entirely with Plato's notion on the subject, that we could almost fancy the above passage of the Phædo had been present to Shakspeare's mind. 'The middle of humanity thou never knewest,'—precisely! Timon is a man who has been a spendthrift, not merely in gold, but in that which is more precious than gold, the affections of the heart. These he has lavished on all around him indiscriminately, or ἄνευ τέχνης, as Plato hath it; he has showered his love alike upon the just and upon the unjust; he has neglected the advice of the son of Sirach, 'be at peace with all men, nevertheless have but one counsellor among a thousand.' And thus, in the words of Flavius, his faithful steward, he is 'brought low by his own heart, undone by goodness:' words which send you at once to the Timon of Lucian—χρηστότης ἐπέτριψεν αὐτὸν καὶ φιλανθρωπία . . . . . καὶ ἀκρισία περὶ τοὺς φίλους. Falsehood and insincerity are things of which, in his prosperous days, he had never suspected the existence among mankind; 'in his breast,' says Flavius, 'doubt and suspect, alas! are placed too late.' Thus has he known nothing but the 'extremity of both ends;' his philanthropy has been as prodigal as his misanthropy will prove boundless. He began by fancying all men were angels; he passes *per saltum* to the conviction, that all men are demons. That middle sort, of which Plato and Apemantus speak, Timon has altogether ignored.

It would be interesting, if space allowed, to point out the art with which Shakspeare has brought out these points in Timon's character, and at the same time avoided misconstruction by introducing the characters of Alcibiades and Apemantus. It must suffice, however, for our present purpose, to have given the above sketch of the principal personage in the play.

How does the case stand with the *Alceste* or *Misanthrope* of Molière? Far otherwise, we at once reply. Timon's position —'a monument and wonder of good deeds, evilly bestowed,' (act v.) is heart-rending in the extreme: 'the quick blows of fortune' have roused him from 'a dream of friendship,' to a perception of the sterner truths of sad reality; 'one winter's brush has left him open, bare to every storm that blows.' But Alceste, his probity and virtue notwithstanding, excites no compassion by his discomfiture. His heart has not been seared by that fiery ordeal of deceptions which Plato has described in honied words, and Shakspeare in words that burn.

We cannot say that he excites ridicule, but laughter he certainly causes: *risus* not *derisus*, to use a distinction which did not escape, though it somewhat bothered, Quintilian: *risus*, not *irrisio*, two things between which, says Spinosa, 'magnam agnosco differentiam:' *Lachen*, not *Verlachen*, as Lessing puts it. It is from not having seized these important distinctions that Rousseau was led to make his attack upon *Le Misanthrope*. That the foibles of Alceste afford us amusement, is no reason why the virtues of Alceste should not command our esteem. Unlike *Timon*, the γελοῖον of his character is an αἴσχος ἀνώδυνον: there is nothing painful or distressing about it; and this is a feature which Aristotle considered essential to comedy. Timon's friends have all along paid him in the base metal of insincerity and dissimulation; but Alceste has nothing on which to hang an indictment for forgery, because he enters into society, and refuses to take those counters of courtesy and politeness which are the current coin of social intercourse. He has none of that 'clementia per quam animi temerè in odium alicujus concitati invectio comitate retinetur.' A somewhat silly but very harmless fop commits a sonnet: Alceste rails and rants, as if the poor man had committed a murder. 'He admire it!! No! Nothing short of a royal edict to the contrary will prevent him from declaring that the writer deserves to be hanged.' One would almost suspect that Rousseau's antipathy to this play arose from the fact that it mirrored himself. In his *Confessions*, he tells a story about being asked his opinion on some daub of a portrait: he made use of the stereotyped answer to such inquiries, namely 'that 'it was a capital likeness.' The absurd part of the affair is, that Rousseau then smites upon his breast, and calls himself liar and fool, for having made this heinous sacrifice of truth to courtesy. Jean Jacques' remorse, we apprehend, is nearly allied to the resentment of Alceste. The fact is, that any man who ventures to make a crusade against the conventional and recognised, and therefore innocent hypocrisies, the small, sweet courtesies of decent and civilised society, may reckon upon being received with open laughter, or a quiet stare, by those more sensible members of the community who, while they do not think it necessary to bid rude defiance to the common usages of life, may possibly be every whit as good Christians, and as upright men, as their more quixotic censor. In a country like France, where drawing-room palaver is at a higher premium than in England, it is probable that this foible of Alceste would wear a much more laughable aspect than in this country. This Wycherley seems to have felt,

from the coarseness with which he has thought proper to spice the character of the *Plain Dealer*, his parody of *Le Misanthrope*. Be this as it may, however, we trust we have made it evident, that to compare the *Timon* of Shakspeare with the *Alceste* of Molière, as Jules Janin and others have done, is to evince more than ordinary powers of misapprehension. In their respective paths, we think it no paradox to say that the two dramatists are equally great. In the present case, however, these paths, so far from being parallel, lie in totally opposite fields. Shakspeare, as became his kingly spirit, has summoned to his aid some of the deepest feelings of human nature, drawn music from the finest fibres of the heart, and extorted pity, even for the deserved agonies of one who has been stung by ingratitude as by a serpent's bite. Molière, as became his more sportive mood, leaves these deeper aspects of our common humanity in the background; while he brings to the fore one of those social foibles which do not accompany a man into his closet, which do but affect and mar his relations in society, which lead him to forget that virtue is not a shirt that it should be starched, that railing declamation against the received usages of the world's intercourse, the current formulas and stock topics by which relief is afforded to stranded conversation, is a violation alike of common sense and common charity. What Goethe could have been dreaming of, when he said that Shakspeare's *Timon* bordered on the comic, and Molière's *Misanthrope* on the tragic, it is hopeless to conjecture. He must have been thinking—as the ancients once wrote—*Boustrophédon*, so that his meaning must be taken backwards, to make any sense of it.

In dealing with Molière's *chef-d'œuvres*, we have assumed all along that the reader is already familiar, or will lose no time in making himself familiar, with the particular play under discussion. Otherwise, we should be loath to pass over the *Misanthrope* without calling attention to the inimitable scenes which it contains, and the admirable portraits of coquette and prude which have made these words almost convertible with the names of Celiméne and Arsinöe. The sample of backbiting and scandal with which Celiméne regales her morning callers in the second act, greatly to the disgust of her lover, Alceste, the misanthrope, is one of the finest scenes in any language, and will probably continue to be a faithful portrait of real life till women cease to have 'dear friends,' visitors, and tongues. The scene is further remarkable from a paraphrase of a passage in *Lucretius*, all that has been preserved from the flames, to which Molière consigned a translation of

that author.* On the supposed allusions to personages of the day, in the characters of *Le Misanthrope*, we are disposed to accept M. Bazin's opinion, who considers the whole thing a pure fabrication of misapplied ingenuity.

In August and November of the same year the public and the court were treated, the one at the Palais Royal to the *Médecin malgré lui*, a good rollicking farce;† the other at St. Germain, to *Melicerte* and the *Pastorale Comique*, both of them very dull affairs, which we shall do well to pass over in silence. The spring and summer of the following year, 1667, Molière was again laid up with severe illness. Louis, the while, was pursuing a career of victory, at the head of his armies, in Flanders. We suspect Le Grand Monarque would have appeared very small indeed if, instead of a Tournay, a Douai, an Oudenarde, and a Lille, he had stumbled on a Sebastopol. While Louis was taking towns Molière took the public by storm. On the 5th of August, 1667, *Tartuffe* was acted for the first time at the Palais Royal. It appears, from Molière's own statements, that he had obtained the King's permission for this purpose previous to the latter's departure for the wars. In spite of the alterations made in the play by the King's desire, in spite of Molière's efforts to soften down the colouring and remove any allusions which might be construed into offensive personalities, twenty-four hours did not elapse before the 'premier president' interdicted a second representation, and by the end of the week the archbishop launched the thunders of excommunication against all who should act, read, or listen to, in public or private, the aforesaid comedy of

* It will be remembered that Hesnaut, one of Molière's condisciples, also tried his hand at Lucretius. In both cases the attempt savours strongly of the influence of Gassendi's teaching. The fact is exceedingly noteworthy, as respects Molière, from its witnessing to the high order of studies in which his youth must have been engaged. M. Taschereau, we should observe, questions the fact of Molière having burned this translation, and believes it to have shared the same fate as his other manuscripts, whatever that fate may have been.

† It may be thought by some that we have treated this play somewhat curtly. So great was Molière's modesty, that we feel it is only a feeble justification on our part to remind the reader that he did not set a higher value on it himself, calling it contemptuously 'Son Fagotier.' He was chided for this injustice towards one of his children, by the following epigram:

Molière, dit-on, ne l'appelle
Qu'une petite bagatelle;
Mais cette bagatelle est d'un esprit si fin
Que s'il faut que je vous le die
L'estime qu'on en fait est une maladie
Qui fait que, dans Paris, tout court au *Médecin.*

Tartuffe. The cabal and persecution directed against him were all the greater from the fact that the play had been received with the most triumphant and deafening applause. It has been remarked by a famous English wit that comedians and clergy often run foul of each other, and for this reason: 'both are moral menders, and it is notorious that two of a trade never agree.' In the present instance, we must remember that Molière's play was considered all the more personal because in it he attacked, not religion itself, but the professors of religion—a cause which is very frequently held to be the more sacred of the two. Even Bossuet and Bourdaloue joined the *soi-disant* champions of Christendom in calling upon the nether fires to consume the audacious dramatist. They were unable, however, to extend to the play the doom they passed upon its author. For never had applause been more vehement or success more signal than on the night of that memorable 5th of August. The first thing Molière did, when prohibition was laid upon a second representation, was to dispatch two of his 'troupe'—Lagrange and Thorillière—to the camp at Lille, to elicit from the King a written permission, as the verbal one had been overridden by the authorities at Paris. The petition is one of the three 'Placets au Roi' annexed to the preface of *Le Tartuffe*. These ambassadors brought answer: 'Qu'après son retour le roi férait examiner de nouveau la pièce, et qu'ils la joueraient.' Back came the King on the 7th of September. But no *Tartuffe* is announced on the bills of the Palais Royal. Four months pass by, and nothing is heard of Molière. M. Bazin conjectures 'qu'il y avait eu du dépit, du chagrin, de la bouderie, dans cette éclipse de quatre mois.' He had a right to be hurt. The sanction already awarded by the King to *Tartuffe* made it evident that he was now yielding his convictions and sacrificing his favourite author-actor to the intrigues and petulance of a so-called religious faction, and to the persecutions of calumny. In 1668, the *Amphitryon*, *Georges Dandin*, and the *Avare*, were brought out at long intervals. The *Amphitryon* is unique of its kind, borrowed though it be—the prologue from Lucian, and the play from Plautus. In no play has Molière introduced so sharp a fire of wit and words, such an inexhaustible stock of good, hearty fun. Voltaire tells us he tumbled off his chair, convulsed with laughter, the first time he read it, and nearly broke his neck. *Avis au lecteur*. It is written in irregular verse, of which the structure betrays consummate art.

Georges Dandin, as everyone is aware, is intended to expose the mischief which results from ill-assorted marriages. The union of needy nobility with moneyed *parvenus* was then, for

the first time, coming into vogue in France, thanks to the vast impulse given to commerce, and the improved social status to those who were engaged in it, by the sagacity of Richelieu. During the eighteenth century it repeatedly garnished the repertory of the dramatists of the day—Dancourt, Lesage, and others. But in *Georges Dandin* and the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* Molière was the first to expose the falseness of the position a man makes for himself when he endeavours to force his way out of his own sphere into one above him, with no other passport but that of a purse. M. de Sotencourt, Georges Dandin's father-in-law, is an admirable portrait of the pompous stolidity of the provincial seigneurs of the seventeenth century, who aggravated their intrinsic insignificance and vacuity by aping the manners of the court noblesse. The *Avare* will furnish matter for remark later on. The passion portrayed is one which Charles Lamb maintains to be of much less frequent occurrence now that the use of banknotes has substituted what he calls a Platonic love for money, in the place of the coarse sensual passion for good thumping dollars.

At length Molière's intreaties were crowned with a successful result. On the 5th of February, 1669, the 'troupe du roi' announced in the morning and in the evening performed *Le Tartuffe; ou, l'Imposteur.*

The essence of the hypocrite's character is described with great truthfulness, readers of Plato will remember, in the second book of the *Republic.* Especially is that trait insisted on which exhibits him as confounding his accusers by simulated eagerness to endorse their accusations. So that if Molière, in that famous scene of the *Tartuffe* (iii. 6.—'Oui, mon frère, je suis un méchant, un coupable, &c.') be charged with borrowing the idea of one of his best bits from a tale by Scarron, the charge is undoubtedly true, but the source should be placed some twenty centuries further back. For, indeed, the French dramatist has but given a living embodiment of the ideas set forth by the Greek philosopher. In no play, however, does Molière furnish such convincing evidence of that power in the creation of character, that happy union of the individual with the general, the real with the ideal, which makes him an exception to all his countrymen, places him abreast of our own Shakspeare, and will hereafter furnish us with a clue to his peculiar genius as a dramatist. You need but compare the hypocrisy of Tartuffe with the ἐσχάτη ἀδικία of Plato, or, better still, with the sketch of Onuphre in *La Bruyère,* in order to perceive, and perceiving, to admire the rare skill with which Molière has given to a general passion, a vague abstraction, all the strong relief of individual character, all the sharp pre-

cision of a definite personality. A hypocrite Tartuffe certainly is; but chiefly, and before all things, is he Tartuffe. As hypocrite, he is the representative of all the free and independent electors of the densely-populated borough of Cant; but as a man he is Monsieur Tartuffe—

Gros et gras, le teint frais, et la bouche vermeille.

It is some small amends for all the gross injustice which German criticism has showered upon Molière, that Goethe had the grace to confess that the opening scenes, or exposition, of this play, were totally without example. Marvellous assuredly is the art, or rather the naturalness, by which the old grandmother, Madame Pernelle, by serving out rations of scolding to all the members of the household, brings out the points in the character of each, and exhibits to the spectator a complete picture of a hypocrite-ridden interior. The besotted infatuation of Orgon, the *paterfamilias*, the calm good sense and purity of his wife, Elmire, the sound genuine piety of his brother Cléante, the hot-headed, self-willed impetuosity of his son Damis, the timorous hesitation of his daughter Mariane, the saucy pertness of her 'suivante' Dorine, even the penchant of Tartuffe for Elmire, all these points are brought before the spectator in an unobtrusive, artless way, so that, even before Tartuffe makes his appearance, you find yourself in possession of every particular connected with the family, without being conscious how you have acquired the information. Yes! Goethe was perfectly right. We believe you might ransack all the stores of dramatic literature, and you would not find a single play which can be compared with the *Tartuffe* for the consummate skill with which, in the exposition, each of the *dramatis personæ* paints his own portrait. Nor is this all. As in Weber's overtures, every instrument in the orchestra has something to say for itself, so in the *Tartuffe* none of the characters are superfluous or lost in the crowd: each contributes his or her quota to the general effect, whether it be the unfolding of Tartuffe's vileness or the progress of the intrigue. So again, in the construction of the play. The fears, hopes, wishes, aroused in any one scene are sure to be met and answered in the scene succeeding. There is nothing to throw the spectator's attention off the rails, nothing that jars, distracts, and deadens his interest.

It is not sufficient, however, to do homage to the merits of this wonderful play as a work of art. We must not suffer this to divert our attention from what we may call its historical aspect. If we were requested to name two men in the seventeenth century whose duty it was to act the part of advanced

sentries in the march of civilization—to go round about and mark well the bulwarks of the citadel of truth, we should at once point to the authors of the *Tartuffe* and of the *Lettres d'un Provincial* respectively. As instruments, as heralds or prophets of the vast social and political reforms achieved by the French revolution of 1789, Molière and Pascal, in university language, deserve to be *bracketed.* Nothing short of a suspicion of this fact, a dim foresight of the deluge, which in tract of time would overwhelm all existing institutions—rotten as they were at their base—can account for the malignant bitterness with which Bossuet levelled his execrations against Molière, with a fearlessness the less surprising as his enemy was dead, and therefore unable to reply. Becalmed, as he had ever been, in the still, stagnant backwater of serene dogmatism, he looked aghast at the maxims of Cléante, which tended to show that some middle position might be tenable between that of a bigot and an atheist. The story of this tilt against Molière is sufficiently curious. Bossuet ferreted out an unhappy theatine monk, by name Caffaro, who had written a Latin thesis, when at college, on the drama. This thesis Boursault translated into French, and prefixed, by way of preface, to one of his comedies. For Bossuet to condescend to call out a common actor, or even an uncommon actor, was altogether *infra dig.*, and not to be thought of. Besides, Molière was dead—a fortunate thing for Bossuet, as he might have been worsted in the encounter. Under these circumstances, Bossuet singles out this unhappy monk aforesaid, hurls at him all manner of threats, from excommunication upwards (or downwards, as the reader pleases), but all the while hits over Caffaro's shoulder at Molière, somewhat after the fashion of Signor Clown, at a Haymarket pantomime. The most comical part of the business is to see the trepidation into which the luckless monk is thrown by thus falling foul of the Bishop of Meaux, to say nothing of a less important personage, to wit, the Archbishop of Paris. Mark the eagerness with which he lays his palinode at the feet of their reverences. He declares before God that he had never read a single play of Racine, Corneille, or Molière: '*at least, he had never read one through:* he had seen some of Boursault's works, and fancied that all other plays were much the same as his. Oh, blessed Boursault! oh, simple, credulous Caffaro! The recantation made, Bossuet followed up the attack by another publication, entitled *Maximes et Reflexions sur la Comédie.* As before, the ostensible object of the writer is to refute the arguments of the Theatine boy-essayist on the drama; but it is plain that every line is in reality directed against that remarkable preface to the *Tartuffe* where Molière

gives a sketch of the rise and progress of his art, from the religious 'Mystery' upwards. There are some splendid bits in this tract of Bossuet's; as, for instance, where he speaks of men betaking themselves to theatres, 'où l'on ne cherche qu'à s'étourdir et qu'à s'oublier soi-même, pour calmer la persécution de cet inexorable ennui qui fait le fond de la vie humaine depuis que l'homme a perdu le goût de Dieu:' a passage which reminds you at once of the ἔκστασις, or 'desire to get out of self,' which figures at the cradle of the Greek drama as a characteristic of the worshippers of Dionysius. So grand are some of Bossuet's descriptions of the nature and effects of a dramatic representation, that to our mind there is a quiet, and of course unintentional, irony in the fact that his very anathemas frequently give you masterly sketches of what a play ought to be, which the most enthusiastic disciple of Thespis could not surpass. Not without a mixture of indignation and contempt do we read the revolting coarseness of this great prelate's strictures upon Molière personally, and as you lay the volume down, you feel thankful—thankful for the credit of human nature in being able to recal the criticism pronounced upon the author of *Tartuffe* by the milder Fénélon: 'Encore une fois, je le trouve grand.'

Four years elapsed between this representation of *Tartuffe* and the death of Molière. Of the plays produced in the interval, two only will occupy our attention: the *Femmes Savantes* and the *Malade Imaginaire*; and of these, the latter mainly commends itself to our notice, less from its intrinsic merits than from the painful circumstances which cast a gloom over its fourth representation. Of the rest, much, no doubt, might be said; but after the sumptuous fare presented to us in the *Tartuffe*, we feel we have some right to be fastidious, even though the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* figure on the bill of fare.

But what of the *Femmes Savantes?* At the commencement of Molière's dramatic career, we found him engaged in a satire of French euphuism, directed more especially against the *Précieuses Ridicules*. It is something of a kindred foible which is exposed by Molière in the *Femmes Savantes*. This difference, however, must be observed, that the subject of the latter play is an extravagance which no lapse of time can render obsolete: as true in the days when Martial exclaimed,

Sit mihi verna satur: *sit non doctissima conjux,*

as in the year of grace one thousand eight hundred and fifty-five. In fact, it is matter of trite observation that whenever this play is acted at the Théâtre Français, it bears, more than

any other work of Molière's, the appearance of being a work of the day. The opening scenes contain a severe satire on some of the early discussions of the French Academy about corporeal and spiritual love. Substitute novels for academic theses, and the shaft will not have been barbed in vain. The great charm of the piece consists in two of the characters who have escaped the prevailing epidemic: the father Chrysale, and his daughter Henriette. The dismay and perplexity of the honest, simple-minded, henpecked bourgeois, are ludicrous in the extreme. Hear him as he describes the miseries of his *ménage:*

> Raisonner est l'emploi de toute ma maison,
> Et le raisonnement en bannit la raison.
> . . . . . .
> Enfin je vois par eux votre exemple suivi,
> Et j'ai des serviteurs et ne suis point servi.

The whole of this outburst is one of the most glorious *morceaux* in the French language, and we can conceive it was after writing this scene that Molière must have exclaimed, 'Si les *Femmes Savantes* ne me conduisent pas à la postérité, je n'irai jamais.' Then, again, as to Henriette: her name has become proverbial in the French language as a type of the perfect woman. How admirably has he realized the ideal which her suitor, Clitandre, draws of an accomplished female mind:—

> Je consens qu'une femme ait des clartés de tout,
> Mais je ne lui veux point la passion choquante
> De se rendre savant afin d'etre savante,
> Et j'aime que souvent aux questions qu'on fait
> Elle sache ignorer les choses qu'elle sait.
> De son étude enfin je veux qu'elle se cache;
> Et qu'elle ait du savoir, sans vouloir qu'on le sache;
> Sans citer les auteurs, sans dire de grands mots
> Et clouer de l'esprit à ses moindres propos.

Mark, too, the unpretending yet commanding power with which she keeps at bay a pack of pedants of either sex, who seek to inveigle her into making a parade of information or of wit.

The only part of the play at which we are somewhat disposed to demur is the broad satire and palpable personality of the attack on Cotin,—an academician indeed, but apparently a very good sort of man of the day. His name, Trissotin, which means 'thrice fool,' or 'fool cubed,' is of course nothing more than a transparent disguise of Cotin. The character of Vadius is supposed to be a satire on Ménage. It is alleged, however, that Ménage bore the attack on his pedantry with such perfect good humour and good sense, that Molière always refused to

acknowledge that he had taken him for his model in constructing the character of Vadius.

We now come to a scene of a very different character. Hushed must be our mirth, for Molière is a-dying. It is the 17th February, 1673—that day twelvemonth Madeleine Béjart had gone to her rest;—Madeleine Béjart, who first ushered him into that fitful career, '*dubiosam fortunam scenicam*,' as Terence calls it, in which he has gotten him a name which oblivion shall not touch till years, and days, and hours are no more. He had just been acting—acting for the fourth time—the part of the *Malade Imaginaire*. With difficulty had he accomplished his task, his cough threatening him every moment with choking, when he was carried home to his house with the seal of death upon his brow. Two sisters of charity are by his side: all other consolations are denied him. The clergy have been summoned, but in vain. For the actor they might have stretched a point; but from the author of *Tartuffe* the last offices of religion must be withheld. The sisters of charity mutter words of peace and prayer. They knew that year by year they had never come to his door in vain, on their rounds of mercy. Molière had ever been lavish of his alms. The lustre-lacking eye wanders restless to the door, but cope and crucifix come not. There is something so sickening in the contemplation of this conduct on the part of the clergy, that we cannot bear to linger on it. Besides, it is now too late to retrieve the error. The rattle in the throat, the blood gushing from the lip, proclaim the advent of Death. A smile flitted o'er his face, and thus passed away the spirit of one of the noblest natures that ever adorned humanity with wealth of wit and words of wisdom.*

Milton has prettily observed: 'He who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem; that is, a composition and pattern of the honourablest things.' In few cases, we firmly believe, has the truth of this principle met with a fitter illustration than in the person of Jean Baptiste Poquelin Molière. Shoals of anecdotes, more or less well authenticated, are to be

* Those who are curious in making collections of the uglinesses, and morbid specimens of uncharitable intolerance, will find in biographies of Molière, best of all in M. Taschereau's, ample details on the narrow contemptible bigotry shown towards Molière's corpse. For our own part, we prefer passing it by, on the same principle as that by which a man steps aside to avoid a dirty puddle. It is more than doubtful whether the bones beneath the tomb in the cemetery of Père la Chaise be the bones of Molière. But what of that? *ἀνδρῶν γὰρ ἐπιφανῶν πᾶσα γῆ τάφος.*

found floating about his memory, all of which drift towards this great and cardinal point in his character, namely, that he was an honest, true-hearted man. He was one of those persons who are often harshly judged of by their fellows, incurious of those sterling qualities of the heart, which do not happen to be placed in a setting to their fancy. Love of truth, scorn of everything false, scorn of scorn itself, kindly feelings, unostentatious acts of manly generosity, are often less fruitful of popularity than those more showy sham-virtues by which disingenuous minds compass the suffrages of giddy, gaping crowds in the market-place or the synagogue. Take, for instance, the following trait:—Baron, a famous pupil of Molière's, requested some pecuniary assistance of his master on behalf of one Mondorge, an actor whom Molière had known in the provinces. 'How much does he want?' asks M.—'Four pistoles,' was the reply. 'Here they are,' says M., 'and twenty besides, that I wish *you* to give him: for I want him to feel it is to you he owes his relief.' He crowned the act by a kind and warm welcome to his old acquaintance. This is but one out of many traits of the same nature: witness his pertinacity in clinging to his craft, literally till his latest gasp, and that from the apprehension—for he was frequently urged to desist, even bribed by a promise of a *fauteuil* in the Academy if he would drop the 'actor'—lest his *troupe* should be thrown into want by the retirement of their chief. Then again, his modesty seems to have made him so reserved in society, that Boileau gave him the *soubriquet* of 'Le Contemplateur.' To our mind, however, his habit of reading his plays to his old housekeeper, Lafôret, exhibits his character under a peculiarly amiable light; prompted, as we have no doubt it was, less by any notion of getting a useful hint, than from a feeling of affection towards one whom long fidelity and pleasant memories had rendered dear to him. Mark, too, his generous and unmeasured commendations of Racine's *Plaideurs*, although that poet, actuated probably by envy, had behaved towards him very scurvily, and had not scrupled to endorse some of the foulest calumnies which Molière's enemies (for Racine professed to be his friend) had set on foot against him. In fact, we are only wasting the reader's time by attempting to prove a point, which, as far as we know, has never been contested. Those who have been most vehement in their censures on the *poet*, have never been able to damage the character of the *man*. The *poet*, therefore, we now pass on to consider, with a view to determining under what aspect his genius ought to be regarded, in order to arrive at a due estimate of its nature and scope.

In conformity with Fontenelle's judicious remark, 'Pour bien juger du mérite de l'auteur, il faut le comparer à son siècle,' we shall begin by examining those elements in Molière's genius which belong to him by virtue of his position in the seventeenth, as opposed to the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries—elements which he has in common (in kind, if not in degree), with other the great classics of his age.

It was not till the seventeenth century that France can be said to have had any literature. Of penmen there had been no lack: but these were rather brilliant meteors flashing fitfully athwart the sky, than members of a literary brotherhood. The idiom had not acquired that flexibility which is essential to the idea of a national literature. The condition of letters in the early part of the seventeenth century fully corroborates this view. They are evidently in a nascent, inchoate state. There is no earnestness about them. Writers bowl periods like balls. Everything is factitious; got-up scintillations of wit and *bel-esprit*. Poetry bore no trace of 'emotion remembered in tranquillity.' Emotion in fact there was none: feelings were put on, not put forth. The circulation of this copper coinage, however, had one good effect. It gradually spread a taste for literature, or at least it made literature the fashion. If it did not give anything worth reading, it furnished a reading public for the great masters of the art who were to come.

This literature, thus inaugurated, may be regarded under various aspects. At the first blush it seems altogether an imitational literature, imitational of classical antiquity, and on this ground it has often been relegated by a splendid ostracism from the hearth of modern literature. The notion, however, is in a great measure false. Thus St. Peter's at Rome, when seen from a distance, has all the appearance of a Pagan temple; approach and enter, and you find yourself in presence of Christian rites. At any rate, from the ban thus placed upon the age you must except Molière and Lafontaine; predecessors they had many, models none; and this, because in them the *man* absorbed the *author*.

This, however, is but playing with the surface. To go deeper, let us bethink ourselves of the maxim, 'la littérature est l'expression la plus vraie de la société:' a maxim much needed, with reference to the seventeenth century, in order to neutralize the influence of a very common fallacy, which Voltaire has endorsed in calling his famous work, *Le Siècle de Louis Quatorze*. No doubt there is some truth—there always *is* some truth—in the current phraseology of popular appellations. No doubt, the great bulk of the writers who adorn

that season of able pens *did* look at human nature through the windows of a palace. Still we must not forget that those who are prepared to abide by this popular aspect, as set forth in the phrase, 'le Siècle de Louis Quatorze,'—those who are eager to trace to the throne the glories which environ stage and studio, pulpit and bar, must not be less prepared to reject the profound maxim of De Bonald, and to put in its place 'La littérature est l'expression la plus vraie du Gouvernement.' That such a substitution cannot be effected without a glaring violation of truth, the literary history of every age and country is ready to declare. For witness the ages with which the same popular phraseology associates the names of a Pericles and an Augustus, and a moment's consideration will suffice to show you that these two men are but the epitomes, as it were, of those critical periods (an autumn or a spring, as the case may be), when social relations undergo complete and entire remodelling. It is only when a new spirit begins to leaven society, when a change comes over those bonds by which men are knit together,—when at Antioch men are first called Christians, or at Paris '*citoyens*'—then you may be sure that a change in literature draws nigh. Politically, these crises may be wide as the poles asunder. In one country, despotism may rule with a rod of iron; in another democracy may toss its cap and shout; still, humanity, civilization, letters, arts, have made a move: a new era is born, so like other babies, we give it a name; be it that of Pericles or of Augustus, Louis or Elizabeth.

In the case of the seventeenth century, it is interesting to observe the analogy between these social convulsions and the development of literature, especially dramatic literature.

The sixteenth century had been filled with strifes, political and intellectual. Civil wars followed on each other's heel. Kings were assassinated—or worse—assassins; the whole length and breadth of the country rang with turmoil; without were fightings, within were fears. Comes Henry of Navarre, and makes an archipelago a continent, France a nation, appeases distractions, blunts the keen edge of hate; and in a word, makes Frenchmen all, of those who drank the Seine, the Garonne, and the Rhone. Comes Richelieu, and finds some poppies still standing in the garden, and straightway cuts them down: gives a helping hand to the weak over the heads of the strong, and so lays a foundation for a superstructure of absolute monarchy. France has now got a government. Comes Louis, and provides the tape—and capital tape it has been, for the administrative reform introduced by him has lasted till the present day; the '*ordonnances*' of Louis XIV.

furnishing the framework, we should remember, for the Code Napoléon. It completed the levelling of all distinctions of rank, that first and great commandment in the despot's decalogue, and cast a neutral tint over the whole surface of society.

It is only by remembering this transformation which society underwent that you can account for the position which the literature of the seventeenth century occupies with relation to the sixteenth and the eighteenth. To use the language of mathematics, there is a solution of continuity between the literatures of the two centuries last named. It is of the sixteenth century that the eighteenth proceeds. The 'Que sçais-je' of Charron, the 'Je ne sçais' of Montaigne, which had been the goal where the sixteenth rested from the race, became the starting place of the eighteenth century. So that the seventeenth century is a parenthesis in the literary history of France. The angry flood of a narrow and rapid current here merges into a broad expanse of calm deep water, but only to resume anon its impetuous course, with yet greater violence than before. What in the political world had been the lassitude of generations worn out by civil war, in literature was harmony and repose. All extravagances of thought were subdued, all asperities of diction were softened down; nay, so great was the thirst after uniformity, that the speech itself was put into academic livery. Further, all the productions of that age exhibit a remarkable sobriety of expression: every idea seems to be fashioned by the understanding, and to receive the sanction of common sense, before it is coloured by the imagination or warmed by the heart. Such is the balance maintained between fancy and judgment, in the writings of the great men of that age, that while you seldom meet with anything commonplace, you *as* seldom meet with anything unnatural, and never with anything unintelligible. Addison's definition of fine writing—'The exhibition of sentiments, which are natural without being obvious,' might have been suggested by these French classics. To preserve unity in the midst of variety, seems further to have been the governing spirit of that literature. 'Omnis porro pulchritudinis forma unitas est,' (Augustine, Ep. 18.) Accordingly, it will be found that the elaboration of details is always sacrificed to general effect. There is something organic —root, branch, and leaf—about the writings of those men. The 'unus et alter assuitur pannus' of Horace applies not to them; but rather, what Lord Bacon says of Nature when she makes a flower or living creature, viz., 'that she forms the rudiments of all the parts at one time.' Thus is the literature of France synthetical, rather than analytical; that is, it has a

proneness to deal with general types, and to avoid the particular shapes and hues of character which cannot escape the attention of one who closely analyses the human heart. This spirit of generalization, however, as opposed to the more subtle spirit of observation, is characteristic of all non-Teutonic literature.

We have mentioned some of the leading features which we believe to be peculiar to the seventeenth century, taken as a whole. Let us now narrow our view to the three great dramatists—Corneille, Racine, and Molière.

Corneille takes some one quality of the human heart, some one high and generous purpose, and makes it think, speak, act. So far his characters are general—abstractions made incarnate. Particular, however, he becomes, and makes his abstractions individuals by the local colour shed upon their words and actions, by the circumstances of their country and social status. His rare powers of invention enable him, by a rich diversity of action and intrigue, to supply the absence of that variety of character, which would otherwise be awanting. Through feebleness of observation and analysis, he runs the risk of sameness—that risk he avoids by his masterly handling of local colour. So that Corneille paints *men* rather than *man*, and Greeks and Romans rather than men. In him the general is less than the particular, the ideal than the real. We feel all the admiration for his heroes that we do for the heroes of ancient story. 'L'homme s'admirera,' says Corneille, 'en me lisant, en m'écoutant.'

Not so with Racine; apart from the rare beauties of his diction, the polish and harmony of his verse, no one can fail to be struck with the monotony and sameness of his personages. How came Racine to stumble where Corneille contrived to keep his footing? Why, because Racine has painted neither man nor men, nor Greeks nor Romans—but only lovers. And this it is of which we spake when we hinted at a possible analogy between the administrative reforms of Louis and the literary reforms of the authors of his reign. As Louis reduced every man to the level of a subject, so Racine to the level of a lover. Louis, so to speak, reduced all the fractions into which France had been split up to a common denominator. Racine carried out a like process of generalization. Avoiding the delineation of varied and many-sided character—shrinking from rivalry with Corneille in the portraiture of stately heroes (whom we might compare to the 'grands seigneurs' of feudalism, the poppies that Richelieu slashed at)—Racine rested his fame on the art with which he tracked the labyrinth of love, believing, with Boileau,—

De cette passion la sensible peinture
Est pour aller au cœur la route la plus sûre.

Observe, 'la *sensible* peinture.' In France, Racine was the first who represented love as a *tender* passion. In the romances of chivalry, in the novels of Madame de Scudéri, it was regarded more as a matter of gallantry than of feeling. It was lodged, if we might so say, more in the head than in the heart—a virtue more than a weakness. In a letter to St. Evremond (the only French critic who seized with truthfulness the distinguishing features of the authors of *Andromaque* and *Polyeucte* respectively), Corneille writes as follows: 'J'ai cru jusqu'ici que l'amour était une passion trop chargée de faiblesse, pour être la dominante dans une pièce heroïque: j'aime qu'elle y serve d'ornements et non pas de corps.' Unfortunately, Racine fell into the very mistake which Corneille so shrewdly denounced. With him love is not merely the fringe, but the substance, the sap and marrow of his personages. Now, it is the peculiarity of love that it absorbs and metamorphoses the whole man. It tones down the strong colouring, neutralizes, for a time, the action of all his other passions; a general haze is thrown over the outstanding points of his character, so that when honeymoons terminate, Chloe and Corydon are quite amazed at the change which has come over the landscape, now that the love-mist has 'lifted.' Thus it is that the monotony of Racine's characters palls upon the reader and spectator. Corneille reproduces historical characters with a power little short of creation, and so far is particular: Racine depicts lovers, and so far is general. The characters in Corneille are true, though not common: the characters in Racine are common, though not true, for love is a disguise. Corneille is all light and no shade: Racine is all shade and no light. Corneille gives you kings, Racine lovers; neither has succeeded in combining *man* with *men*.

To three, and only three, has it been given so to wed the ideal with the real, the general with the particular, as to produce that ἄνδρα τετράγωνον, 'that man all square,' which is the aim of the highest art—Homer, Shakspeare, Molière—a royal triad. These alone have compassed in due sort that perfect unison of type with character which constitutes true idealism, and differences the study from the daguerreotype. Achilles, Hamlet, Tartuffe—in outline these are men of all ages and countries; in colouring they are Greek, Teuton, and Gaul. Let the μῆνις Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος be thrust never so much to the fore, Pliny would never have thought of applying to Homer's portrait of the 'swift-footed' hero that criticism which he passed on an ancient statue—'Non hominem fecit

sed iracundiam.' The like will hold with all the other characters in *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; so that when Aristotle calls the *Odyssey* a mirror of human life, we are reminded of one who thought it his highest aim 'to hold the mirror up to nature.' Yes! Homer and Shakspeare remembered that it is impossible for us mortals to conceive aught of heaven and hell (virtue and vice) unless we postulate earth; that nothing can be more remote from true idealism than to suppose that you have created a living man, when you have, in fact, done nothing more than give a proper name and a tongue to some abstract quality. This is a danger to which all non-Teutonic nations are peculiarly liable; they forget what one of their own writers has told them, viz., that human nature is a 'sujet divers et ondoyant,' and that to cast characters in moulds, to abjure analysis for synthesis, is not the way to body forth that many-sided being called man, or to create personages worthy to bear the Hall-mark of humanity.

Cicero has given us a definition of comedy—'Imitationem vitæ, speculum consuetudinis, imaginem veritatis'—which may serve to illustrate our meaning. It presents the task of the dramatist under a threefold aspect. First, it is incumbent on him to portray to the *life* the personages introduced. Each must have its own physiognomy, for character is the physiognomy of the mind. At least, there must be just that sort of individuality about them which enables you at once to pronounce who a man is at some distance off, though of his features you cannot see a jot. The outline that his body traces upon the void of space, is sufficient for your purpose. Nay, it is conceivable that a portrait of minute fidelity, say a daguerreotype, would fail to produce that kind of instinctive impulse which led you, at once, to pronounce upon the individual in question. The reason hereof is, that the outline, the gait, gave the *essence* of the character; whereas, in the daguerreotype, the sun has portrayed the face with a complication of minutiæ, which our eyes do not take in at a glance. It is by seizing the character, by aiming at the *imitatio vitæ*, that a clever artist will always be able to give you a speaking likeness, although the sitter may have his back towards you. Carry the principle to excess, and you make a caricature.

But to the *imitatio vitæ* the dramatist must add the *speculum consuetudinis*. By this we would understand what we have already called local colouring; whether Cicero so understood it is altogether immaterial. He must not only avoid that kind of neutral tint which is the annihilation of character, but he must make his *dramatis personæ* bear such a social aspect as shall be in keeping with the age in which they live. It is

here, we repeat, that Corneille pre-eminently excels. Individuality, or truth of character, he lacks; in the *imago veritatis* he is equally deficient, for he only paints that side of human nature which resists—his characters are all granite, no clay. But in social truth he is indeed great. No one, short of Shakspeare, exhibits so much of that creative power by which national features and historical personages are reproduced. Perhaps, in the case of Homer, this power, if not greater in degree, is more remarkable in kind, his Greeks being more Greek, if we may so say, than those of the palmy days of Greek literature. This is not the least curious feature of the Homeric poems.

But this is not all. Man belongs to a higher and wider community than civil polity has ever organized; he is member of a nation, but nations themselves are only fractions of one vast integer—Humanity. He may be Saxon or Kelt, Greek or Roman, but over and above all is he ready to exclaim, 'Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto.' Here you have that highest of all laws—the *imago veritatis*—by which the due assortment of the real with the ideal, of the particular with the general, of men with man, can alone be achieved. Applied to plastic art, this *imago veritatis* is that of which Raphael writes to Castiglione while painting his Galatea: 'Io mi servo di certa idea che mi viene alla mente;' or again, it is that of which Cicero says, in reference to Pheidias, 'Ipsius in mente insidebat species pulchritudinis eximia quædam.' But the principle is not confined to limner and sculptor. Of all art, Robortello, an old commentator on Aristotle (we owe the quotation to Corneille), has divined the mystery when he says, 'Unumquodque genus, per se, supremos quosdam habet decoris gradus, et absolutissimam formam, non tamen degenerans a suâ naturâ et effigie pristinâ.' The more you eliminate what is accidental and transitory, the nearer do you approach those 'supremos decoris gradus,' the more complete is the manifestation of the *imago veritatis*. No fantastic flight of an imagination, however brilliant, can atone for the violation of those great cardinal verities which underlie human nature. Straining after effect, abandonment of lasting traits for fleeting tricks, attempts at exaggeration, portraitures of abnormal exceptional characters, coarse realism—these may succeed in achieving a momentary 'furor;' but rely upon it, such works are stamped with the doom awaiting all abortive conceptions, and will not live to become a 'possession' and a 'joy for ever.' Nowhere is this law more splendidly violated than in the dramatic works of Victor Hugo.

It is not enough to yield homage to these three principles

in the creation of a dramatic character, unless you have power sufficient so to apply them that there shall result a kind of trinity in unity (with all reverence be it said), which, like the trefoil, shall be an organic living whole. Herein are those great masters of Epic, Drama, and Comedy,—Homer, Shakspeare, Molière,—most truly worthy of that meed of glory which generation after generation has paid them, in no scant measure. To Molière, however, especial praise is due; for there is something in the very nature of comedy which renders the union of the *imitatio vitæ* with the *imago veritatis*, a task of peculiar difficulty; the τὰ καθόλου being peculiarly liable to mask or absorb the τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον. It has long since been remarked by Diderot and Hurd, that the characters of comedy are in their nature more general than those of tragedy; the foible assailed being common to good as well as bad, the personages are apt to be representative and typal, rather than isolated and individual; personifications of some abstract quality, rather than persons with characters fitly joined together. Still is it Molière's peculiar glory—peculiar, that is, as a writer of comedy—so to have welded together the Abstract and the Real, that our general conception of the Misanthrope, the Hypocrite, and the Upstart, are never for a moment suffered to cast a haze over the strong and salient individuality of an Alceste, a Tartuffe, and a Jourdain. Once, and once only, has the natural tendency of his art been allowed to go beyond due bounds. The portrait of the miser, in the *Avare*, is nothing more than an exaggerated personification of one single absorbing passion, without any background. In fact, his very name is but symbolical of the foible or vice which the writer has undertaken to ridicule; so complete is the sacrifice of all individuality to the workings of a passion which is not only potent, but paramount. Unless, indeed, a deeper truth be herein concealed; unless Molière, and we may add Plautus, intended to point out the brutalizing tendency of avarice, by depicting the total annihilation of Character, which a Greek dramatist represents as the feature which distinguishes brute from man. (*Philemon*, p. 392, ed. Meineke.) Otherwise we cannot fail to be struck with the superiority that our own Shakspeare has shown, in treating a subject which has more analogy than a superficial glance at *Othello* and the *Avare* would lead one to suppose. For, indeed, avarice and jealousy have much in common, both in respect of their all-absorbing nature and of their debasing tendency. Still, Shakspeare has had the art not to allow either of these features to mar or mask the whole man. In none of his characters has he taken more pains to bring to the fore the

speculum consuetudinis, or local colouring, which might throw into deeper relief the *imitatio vitæ*, or individuality of the jealous man. Assuredly, no pale embodiment of an abstraction is that swarthy Moor; in no wanton, fitful mood has jealousy made a victim of one whose social position has been gained by such toiling and moiling, that his susceptibilities are unusually quick, from the fear of again becoming the Pariah that he was before. Nay, the great love with which he loved Desdemona, was mainly fed by the consciousness how largely she must have sacrificed the promptings of pride, to prefer him to one 'of her own clime, complexion, and degree.' Thus exulting, thus loving, we are at no loss to divine how deadly will be his hate: 'Odium erga rem amatam majus erit, ex ratione lætitiæ quâ zelotypus ex reciproco rei amatæ amore solebat affici.' (*Spinosa*, Eth. iii. 35.) So artfully, you will observe, has Shakspeare contrived to entwine the fibres of jealousy round the whole of the man's heart; growing with his growth; a natural channel, into which the currents of the Moor's hot blood were sure sooner or later to flow.

Molière's failure in the portrait of Harpagon, and Shakspeare's triumph in that of Othello, are perhaps the best illustrations we could give, both of what ought *not* and of what ought to govern the relations existing between the τὰ καθόλου and the τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον. The art with which Molière has elsewhere combined, in due proportion, the elements of his dramatic character, we hold to be the key to his genius. So that when A. W. Schlegel winds up his coarse criticism on Molière, by saying that the originals of his individual portraits have long since disappeared, we hasten to reply, that unless German nature be a different thing from human nature, this contemptuous Zoilus of the French drama (both buskin and cothurn) must have gone through the world with his eyes shut, not to have recognised, again and again, the originals of those types into which the genius of Molière has breathed the breath of life. Such sneers at the obsolete manners, manners *à la* Louis Quatorze, of the characters in Molière's plays, deserve to be met with an answer similar to that which Sully returned when his re-appearance in the council chamber of Louis XIII. elicited the sneers of some court fops, who could not brook the antiquated cut of his hose: 'Sire, lorsque le feu roi votre père, me faisait l'honneur de m'appeler à ses conseils, nous ne parlions point d'affaires qu'on n'eût au préalable renvoyé les baladins et les bouffons de cour.'

In the dramatic literature of the nineteenth century, a new element seems to have taken the place of that Idealism of character which constituted the glory of the seventeenth

century. Interest of plot or of intrigue (in Molière, a matter of less than even secondary consideration), *telling* situations, passions torn to rags, and above all, stage decorations, such are the ingredients which spice the dramatic cookery of London and Paris. Compare, for instance, the *Lady Tartuffe* of Madame Emile de Girardin with the *Tartuffe* of Molière.* The extreme intricacy and gross improbability of the plot are aggravated by the clumsy manner in which it is woven together. As far as we can collect, the only moral to be drawn from the play is, to avoid making your exit from a lady's chamber by the window, especially if you are carrying a gun. For observe: Madame de Blossac, *alias* Lady Tartuffe, has four lovers. Three of these she loves: the fourth—for he is a 'maréchal'—she only wishes to marry. Number one ends a stolen interview by jumping out of Madame's window, gun in hand. The gun goes off: so does Madame de Blossac; but she leaves her bouquet, to say nothing of her lover's corpse, behind her. Probable, very! Said bouquet comes into possession of number two (who it must be said does not return the affection of this choice specimen of her sex), so that the lady's effort to save her character is somewhat endangered, as the sequel will show. Number three also declines making use of the door, and is greeted on his descent by a dog of irascible temperament; said dog belongs to a young lady in the same hotel, who rushes to the rescue, by pacifying the vicious mastiff, with marks of simulated tenderness towards his prey; said young lady turns out to be a niece of number four, le Maréchal d'Estigny, and the betrothed of number two, Hector de Renneville. Bent on frustrating this marriage, partly from financial, partly from spiteful motives (the *spretæ injuria formæ*), Lady Tartuffe fabricates a *histoire scandaleuse* out of the dog affair, by representing the scene outside the window, as a ditto of what had been going on within. Not the least, assuredly, of the absurdities of the plot, is this preposterous and suicidal calumny set on foot by one whose *alias* would lead one to suppose that she was not less wily than worthless. To tell how her schemes are defeated, and she herself confounded, partly by the treachery of her confidant (mark another absurdity—hypocrites of Tartuffe's calibre keep their own counsel) partly by the production of her bouquet, but chiefly by the candour and the innocence of the maréchal's niece, is beside

* Madame de Girardin challenges the comparison by adopting such a title. Beaumarchais was more modest: he sheltered the words '*L'autre Tartuffe*' behind the first member of the title, '*La mère coupable.*'

our purpose. We merely wished to give an apposite illustration of the feeble makeweights—an intricate and melodramatic tissue of absurdities—by which the writer endeavours to compensate her deficiencies in the portraiture of character. In any future edition or representation it would be well to substitute, in the title, a parody of Musset for that of Molière, by calling the play—*Il faut qu'une fenêtre soit ouverte ou fermée.* For our own part, before the thing made its appearance, we had strong misgivings as to its merits, from the fact that the writer, as we understood, was hesitating whether to call it *La Prude* or *Lady Tartuffe.* Our suspicions were confirmed by the result. By endeavouring to unite both features —prudery and hypocrisy—in one character, Madame de Girardin committed the same mistake as a famous English philosopher, when he made two holes in his door, one for the cat the other for the kitten. To rival Molière's *Tartuffe* was difficult; to make the same portrait serve for Tartuffe and Arsinoe (that matchless type of prudery in *Le Misanthrope*) was impossible. To complete the inconsistencies of this nondescript character, Lady Tartuffe adds to her hypocrisy and prudery a very namby-pamby kind of remorse, and what we are led to suppose is a genuine love for number two aforesaid.

And is it for such trash* as this, set off though it be by the meretricious ornaments of brilliant dialogue and smart repartees, that we are called upon to exchange those great and glorious monuments which the genius of Molière has erected? Truly it is well for us that our taste, blown about as it is by every wind of Fancy, can betake itself for shelter to those harbours of refuge where the great classics of all nations ride stately and secure. Not with impunity can we cease from communing with those choice spirits of Foretime, whose works no lapse of years can render antiquated, founded as they are on the principle, by virtue of which alone man can penetrate within the Veil of the Temple, a High Priest of Literature and Art; I mean the principle, that the Beautiful is but the reflection of the True. Not with impunity can we turn aside from the

---

* Since we wrote the above remarks, the authoress of *Lady Tartuffe* has been removed from a circle which she adorned by her talents and her virtues. We are glad to have an opportunity of stating, while these pages are passing through the press, that it is not without some qualms of remorse we find we have been betrayed into language which, to the admirers of Madame de Girardin—their name is legion—may seem harsh, flippant, and unjust. Will it be any compensation to express our conviction that in the loveliness with which she has clad one of the characters in the play—the maréchal's niece—she has but mirrored the graces of her own gentle nature?

exhibition of 'sentiments which are natural without being obvious,' which come from the heart, and to the heart appeal, for sentiments which are the forced utterances of morbid natures, extorted by situations which we feel to be improbable, and witnessing to characters which we know to be impossible. Surely there is something febrile, unhealthy, spasmodic in the literature of the present day, which is not to be found in that of the classical ages. But here we pause: for we are anxious to anticipate the rejoinder which may be cast in our teeth—'La littérature est l'expression la plus vraie de la société.'

At the commencement of this Essay we proposed to inquire how far Molière's genius bore the trace of the age in which he lived, how far it was essentially his own. That promise we have endeavoured to fulfil; and very little to our own satisfaction have we succeeded. We trust the judgement and reflection of our readers will supply what is awanting, and correct what is amiss. We have attempted to show, that the absence of all extravagance of conception or of expression—the preference of general effect to laboured details—the equilibrium maintained between the imagination and the judgement, that all these are qualities which he possesses in common with other the great classics of his age. On the other hand, we have endeavoured to point out in what respect, and in what degree, his power in the creation of *dramatic character* differs from, and surpasses that, which is to be discerned in the works of Corneille and Racine. The art with which he combines *man* with *men*, makes persons of passions, characters of types, and gives to general qualities the sharp relief of individual personality—this art is, to our apprehension, so transcendently great, that we have felt justified in placing the author of *Tartuffe* on the same pinnacle as Homer and Shakspeare. How far the details of this inquiry may meet with the approbation of our readers, we know not; of this, however, we feel assured, that all true students of French literature will not hesitate to subscribe to the words of Lafontaine: 'Molière . . . c'est mon homme.'

C. K. W.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN AMERICA.

THE languages of the various European settlers of America, transported to that remote region, and for many years almost isolated there, might naturally be expected, in the lapse of time, to exhibit a certain amount of difference from the same tongues as continued to be spoken in their original countries. Such difference would be brought about by two opposite sets of causes—the changes which the language underwent in its new position, and those which it did *not* undergo. For, though the written languages of modern Europe have sustained no remarkable alterations since the settlement of America, the familiar phrases of conversation alter, not merely from century to century, but even from generation to generation. If, on the one hand, local peculiarities of custom or contact with other languages would introduce new terms in the new country, on the other hand, fashion or accident itself might work changes in the old country which would not penetrate to the new. In a word, then, we should expect to find in the colonial speech, compared with that of the mother country, *archaisms* as well as *neologisms*.

But as regards the continental languages which have permanently established themselves to a greater or less extent in America, these changes excite the smallest possible amount of curiosity. Little, for instance, is known, and as little cared about, the nature and extent of the modifications which the Spanish language may have received in the Hispano-American republics, for these countries occupy but an insignificant place in the political world, and what is more to the point here, are absolutely nowhere in the literary world. With the English language, however, the case is widely different. Contemporaneous with the astounding increase in material greatness and political rank of the United States, has been the development of their literature, both in quantity and quality, to an extent which makes a complete anachronism of Sidney Smith's once

pertinent query on the subject. Such being the case, it is impossible that any Transatlantic peculiarities of expression, any novelties, whether by way of alteration or addition, seeking to introduce themselves into the parent speech; any *Americanisms*, in short, should not attract some attention; and it seems to us equally clear that they not only attract passing attention, but merit serious regard. If the hypothetical modifications of dead, nay, of extinct languages, have been deemed worthy not merely of the philologist's speculations, but also of the historian's researches; if what *may* have happened to the Pelasgic tongue under certain possible circumstances has been considered a question deserving grave discussion, it is certainly worth while to investigate the course of a great living language, transplanted from its primitive seat, brought into contact and rivalry with other civilized tongues, and exposed to various influences, all having a *primâ facie* tendency to modify it.

It must be observed, too, that these peculiarities are not the accidents of infancy, but the settled traits of maturer growth. They are not diminishing, but increasing. The scanty colonial and *paulo-post colonial* literature of America appears to contain no marked deviations from the English models which it followed, indeed, almost to servility. If any greater differences existed in the familiar language of conversation, they were generally unknown to or unheeded by Englishmen. So much so, that when Captain Morris wanted to write a song against 'Billy Pitt' *in the Yankee dialect*, he could scarcely find a peculiar 'Yankee' word or phrase wherewith to season it. No such difficulty now exists. On the contrary, Americanisms so abound, that some of them have flowed over, as it were, spontaneously into English popular writing.

Nevertheless, the subject has been much slighted on both sides of the Atlantic. On the eastern side it has been regarded too exclusively in a ludicrous light. 'Yankeeisms' in this century have taken the place occupied by *bulls* and other Hibernicisms in the last, as a fertile source of common-place material for cheap wit and vulgar ribaldry. The scribbler who could interlard his writings with a sufficient number of 'guesses' and 'calculates,' 'almighty smarts,' and 'tarnation cutes,' has flattered himself with the idea of having thereby, at the same time established his reputation for humour, and presented an unanswerable argument against democracy. The extent to which trash of this kind has been imposed on the public is hardly credible. Anything which was bad English has been passed off for American. Not more than fifteen years ago a book was published in London, professing to contain, under a

feigned name, the adventures of an English traveller in America. Every page of it contained ample proof that the writer had never crossed the Atlantic. The Americans were represented speaking a jargon composed in about equal parts of Hibernicisms and Cockneyisms; while, as if to give the fullest exhibition of the author's ignorance, he had illustrated his work with impossible drawings, representing, for instance, gentlemen walking about the streets of New York in breeches and long stockings, and the members of congress seated promiscuously on benches like those of Parliament. Yet this very book received the honour of a panegyrical notice, extending through several columns of a leading London journal. After this, it is less to be wondered at that Bon Gualtier's amusing squib about 'the æsthetic gin-sling party at Peleg Longbody's,' was taken by some good souls for a real sketch of American literary society.

On the western side of the Atlantic more than one cause has operated to impede the investigation of the subject. In the first place, many Americans, even of the most learned class, are not altogether conscious of any national peculiarities of speech; they may have a vague suspicion of their existence, but possess no accurate knowledge of their nature. Nor is this matter of surprise when we consider that the spoken language of a country always contains expressions which do not generally find their way into writing, at least into the best description of writing, and that most usually read; so that a thorough knowledge of the written tongue by no means implies a corresponding acquaintance with the spoken, as the experience of any tourist or traveller abundantly shows. The few American writers, on this subject, therefore, have mostly erred both by default and excess: they have omitted distinctive American peculiarities, and they have set down as Americanisms expressions which are only vulgarisms, or not even that. Thus Bartlett's book, while it fails to notice some notorious Americanisms, admits a number of expressions which are perfectly good English, or, at any rate, perfectly English.

But a more serious reason has tended not merely to impede, but absolutely to prevent, Transatlantic investigation of this subject. The national vanity has been aroused—somewhat justly annoyed, perhaps by the shabby treatment above referred to; and Americans have taken up the line of either denying or explaining away the existence of any distinctive national peculiarities of speech. Some of the arguments employed have been handled with so much plausibility and ingenuity, that it may not be amiss to notice them briefly. They have a superficial appearance of bearing on the point,

though in reality far wide of it, and doubtless appear satisfactory to a number of sincere believers.

It is said, for example, that the great majority of reputed Americanisms can be traced to an English source, being either provincial or archaic forms, or both. Now, that many of these peculiarities can thus be traced is perfectly true; indeed, both the number and the force of producible instances are greater than most persons suppose. One of the first expressions that would probably strike an inexperienced Londoner as peculiar on his arrival in the United States, is *rare* for underdone meat. But this word (obviously originating in a mispronunciation of *raw*) is noted in *Halliwell's Dictionary* as common to *several* provincial dialects. When Captain Marryatt undertook to give a popular vocabulary of Transatlantic idioms, *corned,* for intoxicated, occupied a conspicuous place in the list, and the Captain thought it worth while to explain the origin of the term philosophically, 'because whiskey is made of Indian corn.' Yet this very expression is a Salopianism, and recorded in Halliwell as such. We can adduce a still stronger case. If there ever was a phrase deemed particularly Transatlantic in origin, it is that of *Lynch Law* for summary and informal justice. Yet there appear good reasons for doubting its western paternity. It is usually explained as having been derived from the emphatic practice of a certain Judge Lynch, who lived somewhere in the 'Far West.' But no authentic or consistent accounts of this functionary exist; no tangible grounds for supposing him to be anything more than a mythical personage, while a very probable solution of the phrase presents itself in the parent tongue. *Linch,* in several of the northern-county dialects, means to beat or maltreat. Lynch Law, then, would be simply equivalent to *club law;* and the change of a letter may be easily accounted for by the fact that the name of Lynch is as common in some parts of America as in Ireland. It is like the introduction of an *a* into *loafer* from the analogy of *loaf,* or the propensity of the lower classes all over France to express a certain beverage, to them a rare exotic, by the combination of letters *tait,* after the model of the more familiar word *lait.*

But not to multiply instances, and admitting, once for all, every possible case of the kind that can be claimed, it certainly seems an odd way of proving that American speech contains no deviations from the standard of good English, to prove that it abounds in English provincialisms. What do we mean by good English but such English as is written in good books, and talked by educated and accomplished men; the standard of the best English society, and particularly the best London

society? Surely, to show that any form of speech contains provincialisms is of itself tantamount to showing that it contains deviations from the best standard. Moreover, we shall have occasion to remark, in the course of these observations, that some very decided Batavianisms and Gallicisms prevail even in the best American society; and *these* no power of reasoning can bring into the category of English provincialisms.

Again it is urged, and the assertion in a measure springs from the preceding one, that the number of actually new words invented in America is very small. We admit this argument to be true, *so far as it goes;* but it does not go so far, by any means, as its supporters imagine. They seem to forget that there is such a thing as applying a new *meaning* to existing words, and of this novelty the examples in America are sufficiently numerous. Thus *creek* is a perfectly legitimate English word, but its legitimate English meaning is 'a small arm of the sea,' whereas in America it is invariably used to designate a small river, except when it happens to be used to designate a large one. *Draw* is an old-established English verb, but the Americans have further employed it as a noun, and made it do duty for *draw-bridge.*

Thirdly, it has often been asserted that the deviations from standard English which occur in America are fewer and less gross than those which may be found in England herself. For instance, that there is no part of the United States where an honest citizen, unused to country ways, or a foreigner who had learned the language from classic sources, would be so little able to understand the people or make himself understood by them, as he would be in some parts of Cornwall or Yorkshire. And that, taking the average, the provincialisms of England, on the whole, exceed those of America. This is the line of argument which sometimes develops itself into the amusingly paradoxical assertion that the Americans speak better English than the English themselves. But such reasoning is on a par with that of one who should consider himself to have demonstrated that the upper classes of America were richer than those of England by showing that the lower classes of England were poorer than those of America, or that the average wealth of the American population per head was greater than that of the English. There is no inconsistency in admitting that the worst English *patois* may be less intelligible than the worst American, and yet maintaining that the best currently spoken American contains appreciable deviations from the true English standard. The English provincialisms *keep their place;* they

are confined to their own particular localities, and do not encroach on the metropolitan model. The American provincialisms are more equally distributed through all classes and localities, and though some of them may not rise above a certain level of society, others are heard everywhere. The senate or the boudoir is no more sacred from their intrusions than the farm-house or the tavern.

But it has been positively affirmed, that during the last half century the educated English public has introduced and received more neologisms into the common language than the educated American public, particularly in conversation. As regards *written* English, the comparison is one which any reader can make for himself. The decision would depend in no small measure on *what* American writers he admitted as standards of writing. But in both cases, even if we allow the claim to its fullest extent, the argument does not answer its purpose. Until it can be shown that the English nation and its literature are absolutely in a state of decay, the actual usage of educated Englishmen must be the standard of English. Any other principle would compel us to regard the people of Dornshauser, or perhaps of some Canadian village, rather than the inhabitants of Paris, as the authorities in French phraseology.

The mention of conversation leads us to note another difficulty in the way of our investigations—the fact that many of the American peculiarities are almost exclusively conversational. This is natural enough, too, considering how many of the familiar phrases of life in all modern languages are nearly independent of dictionaries and literary models, as we have already had occasion to remark. Thus the *colloquialisms* of the two countries, going on apart, with no general contact, would naturally tend to differ, especially as the spoken part of a language is apt to have less stability than the written, even without taking into account the influence of foreign contact on the American side. An inadequate idea, therefore, of the extent of American innovations on the mother-tongue would be formed by one who was conversant only with American literature. The admitted classics of that literature—such as Irving and Bryant, for example—use language in which the most fastidious would be puzzled to detect any deviation from the purest English models. In such specimens of more fugitive writing as usually find their way across the Atlantic, some peculiar terms occasionally peep out; still, the national stamp on them consists more in the general tone of a style continually ambitious to get upon stilts, than in any separate

words or expressions. But when it comes to *talking*, the most refined and best educated American, who has habitually resided in his own country, the very man who would write you, on some serious topic, volumes in which no peculiarity could be detected, will, in half a dozen sentences, use at least as many words that cannot fail to strike the inexperienced Englishman who hears them for the first time. To illustrate this statement, we will suppose an extract from a conversation between two American gentlemen, one of whom joins the other in the country, and relates a series of accidents that happened to him on leaving the city. (The incidents are necessarily of the most trivial description, as we have to do with every-day, familiar phrases.)

'First of all, our new *waiter* forgot to go to the *bookstore* for your parcel, so that was left behind. I am afraid it will be as long on the road as the last bouquet you sent us, which was quite *wilted* when it arrived. Then, as I was *riding* down quietly in a *hack*, one of the horses, a vicious-looking *sorrel*, tried to run away, and the hack did run into a *wagon*, and upset it. When the horse was stopped, he began to kick, and kicked away his *whiffle-tree* and the *dash-board*. I jumped out on the *side-walk* and fell against a lady who was coming down her *stoop*. Neither of us was hurt, but I tore my *pantaloons* and broke a *suspender*, and the lady's *hat* was crushed. As we were only two *blocks* from the steamboat, I carried my small amount of *baggage* on board myself, and the first person I saw was X——, whom you admire so much; and he is *clever*, certainly, but I should say, though he is your friend, decidedly silly.'

Every one of the words italicized above, with the *possible* exceptions of *riding* and *clever*, would be naturally used under the circumstances by an American gentleman, and some of them would be apt to puzzle an Englishman just arrived. In spite of the well-known advice to an awkward horseman, to 'get inside and pull up the blinds,' he would hardly be able to conceive how the narrator could ride *in* a hack, still less how the hack could upset a wagon, and, not to dwell on other expressions, the last sentence would seem to him to involve a direct contradiction. It may be observed, by the way, that many familiar English terms are equally strange to the untravelled American. He has no idea (unless from the context) of what is meant by the 'clever hack' advertised for sale, or 'the hoarding round the column,' which he would probably suppose to be a misprint for *boarding*. It takes him some time to understand that giving horses *corn* means giving them *oats*, or

that *birds* (when cooked) comprise but a very limited variety of the feathered race.*

It may not be wholly uninstructive to run through our list of italics, and note their respective origin. First, then, *waiter* for footman. This usage has an important social signification, as showing how hotel habits and phrases have predominated in the country, and invaded American private life. *Bookstore* is bookseller's shop, *store* being used for shop universally. Sometimes the distinguishing epithets, also, are strangely altered; thus a linen-draper's shop is termed a *dry-goods store*. The origin of the term is doubtful; perhaps national vanity had something to do with it, the proprietor of the smallest concern wishing to give it the title, if he could no other quality, of a large commercial establishment. *Wilted,* for withered, is a provincialism; Halliwell assigns it to Bucks. *Hack,* in America, is always the abbreviation of hackney-*coach,* and driving is usually called *riding,* equestrian exercise being distinguished as riding *on horseback.* These phrases, too, throw a light on national manners, and prove an American preference for carriage over horse exercise. Does the American, then, never use the word *drive?* Yes, but he understands it only of holding the reins himself. Thus, 'I rode to town† with Smith,' *i.e.,* 'I went in his vehicle and he drove me;' 'I drove to town with Smith,' *i.e.,* 'I drove him.' A few purists preserve the English distinction of the words.

Sorrel horse for chesnut is a term now fallen into complete disuse in England, yet it has become obsolete only within the last forty years. It was a Suffolk word, and the sign of *the sorrel horse* probably exists to this day in front of some Suffolk ale-houses. The Americans also use the word chesnut, but with a limited signification, applying it only to the *dark* chesnut, what the French call *alezan brûlé.*

---

* If a novelist be admissible authority on a philological point, it would appear from a passage in *Pelham* that the game-laws (or their evasion) gave rise to this *alias* of the partridge. A contrary process of transformation was produced in New York by a similar cause. Some of the eating-houses gave the name of *woodcock* to 'pork and beans,' *Anglicé,* bacon and beans. Strangers who wished to enjoy the forbidden game out of season, seeing *woodcock* on the bills of fare, called for the bird, and were served with the quadruped, and the above explanation by way of sauce to it.

† We are here reminded parenthetically that *town* in America always means the particular town in which *the speaker* resides, not the capital or chief city. The inhabitant of the Transatlantic Rome, or Utica, meeting one of his neighbours in New York, would never ask him, 'How long have you been in town?' That question would be appropriate when they met again in the Rome, or Utica, aforesaid. Country democracy owns no metropolis.

The word *wagon*, which the Englishman associates with the idea of one of the heaviest possible vehicles, an American as naturally associates with the idea of one of the lightest possible vehicles. How this very decided change was effected it is not easy to explain. Perhaps it is a Teutonism (*wagen*, for carriage generally, the 'wagon' being, *par excellence*, the vehicle of the country), but the general absence of Teutonisms in America militates against the supposition.

Whiffle-tree, the invariable American for splinter-bar (at least in the case of the wheel-horses), is the rustic *whipple-tree* very slightly changed. *Dash-board* is merely a corruption of *splash-board*.

Side-walk, causeway, *trottoir*, is probably a pure American coinage. So is *suspenders*, for braces. *Stoop* (the steps of a house) is pure and almost literal Dutch. *Pantaloons* for trousers, and *hat* for bonnet, are obvious Gallicisms (*pantalon* and *chapeau*); their introduction is easily accounted for by the fact that many of the fashionable tailors and most of the fashionable milliners in the large cities are of French birth or descent.

Block is primarily the parallelogram of houses bounded by four streets; thence, and more usually, the row of houses in one street between two others. 'You must go so many blocks,' *i.e.*, so many streets. The English colloquial phrase, 'a block in the street' for a stoppage in the street, is unknown to Americans. Equally unknown is the familiar term *luggage*, the graver word *baggage* being always employed.

Clever is generally used in the sense of amiable, as it still is by the peasantry in some of the southern counties of England. Some purists maintain the ordinary English meaning of the word, which often leads to ambiguity, so that it is not uncommon to hear the question asked, 'You say he is clever; do you mean *English clever* or *American clever*?'

To examine, determine, collect, and explain all the American peculiarities of language would be a work of no little time and trouble, and one demanding no trifling preparation. A full knowledge of all the English provincial dialects, of at least five other modern languages *and their dialects*, an intimate acquaintance with every species of American literature, and a prolonged residence in each of the four great sections of the American Union, would be *some* of the requisites for such a task; while the results of the investigation, given at length, would be sufficient to occupy a tolerably large volume. We shall therefore confine ourselves to a brief notice of some of the most salient peculiarities and remarkable words belonging to the principal localities.

To begin with the New England States, those six lying east of the Hudson, and constituting the veritable 'Yankeeland.' Their peculiarities have obtained earlier and more extensive currency than those of other sections of the United States, which may be attributed, in a great measure, to the migratory and adventurous propensities of the inhabitants, which scatter them all over not only their own country, but the whole civilized and uncivilized world.

There is no want of books written in the 'Yankee' dialect, and though such books usually have the fault of academic Latin, namely, that of being *too* idiomatic, several of them give a fair idea of the popular dialect in these States. The English reader's thoughts will naturally revert to Judge Haliburton, and certainly *Sam Slick* is often to the point here, but he must be taken with some grains of salt; his Yankeeisms are interspersed with a good many Westernisms and much general slang. In an investigation like the present, slang ought to be put out of consideration as much as possible. It may be asked, How *is* it possible? What is slang? Where do you draw the line? We answer, By *slang* we understand, first, technical expressions peculiar to a body of men, forming a part of their customs and a bond of union and fellowship, such as the cant terms of students, political nicknames, and the special phraseologies of particular trades and professions. Secondly, and more generally,—expressions consecrated, as it were, to Momus, from their birth, devoted to comic, or would-be comic, literature and conversation, always used with a certain amount of ludicrous intent, and which no person, except from slip of the tongue or pen, or unfortunate force of habit, would employ in serious writing or discourse.

Among books written by Americans themselves, the two *Jack Downings* (Seba Smith's and Davis's) deserve to be particularized. Better and more recent than these, more easy also to follow in its allusions, is Lowell's laughter-moving satire on slavery and the Mexican war, the *Bigelow Papers*. Once for all, we may caution the reader to bear in mind that these books represent the language of the masses, and are no more to be taken for that of educated society than the conversations of Jeames Yellowplush and Sam Weller for those of London gentlemen. Haliburton has indeed made an *attaché* of his clockmaker, but this is merely an author's licence; to fill such a post with a person of Mr. Slick's habits and antecedents, is a point which even the eccentricities of American diplomacy have not yet reached. The glossary at the end of the *Bigelow Papers*, though occasionally satirical, is mostly in sober earnest, and affords a tolerable proof that American as

well as English polite readers would occasionally meet with difficulties in the text requiring elucidation.

On examining these or any other good specimens of the New England dialect, it will be seen that its peculiarities do not consist so much in the introduction of new words, as in the general style of its pronunciation. Among its features of this sort may be mentioned a nasal intonation, particularly before the diphthong *ow*, so that cow and now are sounded *kyow* and *nyow;* a perverse misplacing of final g after n, almost equal to the Cockney's transposition of initial *h*, making *walkin* of walking, and *capting* of captain; a shortening of long o and u in final syllables; *e.g., fortun* and *natur* for fortune and nature; on the other hand a lengthening of various short syllables, as *nauthin* for nothing, and *genuine* for genuine. Also a general tendency to throw forward the accent of polysyllables and sometimes even of dissyllables, *e.g.,* territóry, legíslative, conquést. This tendency, from which, by the way, the very best classes of New England society are not altogether free, has been noticed as a Scotticism, erroneously, we think, for the Scotch sometimes misplace the accent; they throw it *backward* as often as forward, in mágazine for instance. Some peculiar words, however, are found, as—doing *chores,* for doing miscellaneous jobs of work, (a north-country word, *of char*-woman), and many peculiar uses of ordinary words. Thus, by the converse of the rule, 'handsome is that handsome does,' the New Englanders call an ill-natured person *ugly* or *humly* (homely), and by a similar transference of physical to mental qualities, they call a clever man *smart.* This last expression has travelled beyond its original locality, and is generally current among the masses all over the Union. *Friends* they use for *relations,* precisely (and it is worth observing as an example of the coincidences that will occur in idioms the farthest removed by time and place), as the Greek tragedians used φίλος. The employment of *guess* to express a vast variety of mental processes, *to think, to presume, to suppose, to imagine, to believe,* &c. &c., was one of the earliest peculiarities of speech observed in America, and attributed to all Americans promiscuously. It is a pure New Englandism, and to put it into the mouth of a New Yorker, a Virginian, or a Missourian, is as great a blunder as it would be to represent a Cockney saying *tay* for tea, or a Scotchman *wint* for went. A striking feature of the New England dialect is its propensity to qualify assertions by the introduction of *sorter* or *kinder* (from *sort o', kind o';*) *he kinder laughed, I felt sorter foolish.* The use of *any* for *at all,* and *some* for *somewhat, in some degree,* probably originated in New England, though no longer confined to it.

We see that besides the expressions peculiar to this region, there are others which, originally proceeding from it, have been adopted over all the Union. Various political terms come under this category. *Caucus,* for secret political assembly, is the most notable of these. This word, which looks as if it might have a classic origin, is simply a corruption of *caulkers,* or *caulk-house,* the patriots of Boston before the Revolution having been accustomed to hold their meetings in a caulker's shed.

It would not do to take leave of New England and its *isms* without touching on the familiar epithet of its people, *Yankees.* This term, often applied by foreigners to the whole nation, belongs in strictness to the New Englanders only, though as we travel southward we find a tendency among the people to apply it, in a bad sense, to those north and east of them. Thus a Marylander will call a New Yorker *Yankee,* and be dubbed *Yankee* himself by a Mississippian. As to the origin of the word, there is no reasonable doubt that it dates from the colonial wars, and is an Indian corruption of the French *Anglais,* the Indian tribes not having the sound of *l* in their language. The term is therefore additionally remarkable, as being the only *Indianism* that has found a place among Americanisms; for such words as canoe, calumet, wampum, &c., are exotics common to both English and American writers.

Passing to the Middle States, we find very few expressions *peculiar* to the New Yorkers; at the same time there are some striking words of Dutch origin, we may almost say literally *Dutch words,* which originating in the city of New York when it was the city or town of *New Amsterdam,* have thence spread over all the Union and become generally received, as it was natural they should from the almost metropolitan position of their birth-place.

The first of these is *stoop,* a genuine Dutch noun very slightly disguised in its present orthography. *Stoop* in Dutch means the same as *stoup* in English, a drinking measure; the real Batavian word represented is *stoep,* from the verb *stoepen,* to sit or *stoop* down. Originally applied to the bench placed, according to old Dutch custom, in front of the house, it came to designate all the steps on the topmost of which the bench was placed, and remained attached to them after the bench itself was swept away by the improvements of modern fashion. The word is used in all classes of society, as naturally as *door* or *window.*

The next word, *loafer,* is so very common in America, that although closely approximating to a slang term, it cannot be overlooked here. The expression only found its way into

writing about the year 1830, but had been in use long before, especially in the vicinity of the markets. It is equivalent to vagabond *intensified*, and its personal application is one of the greatest insults that can be offered to an American—something like calling a Frenchman *canaille*. It is singular that the verb (of later formation), has not necessarily a bad meaning; a man will say of himself, 'I have been loafing about;' that is, I have been lounging, or idling. As to the derivation, it clearly has nothing to do with *loaf*. We must seek the root in Dutch. It *may* be from *loof*, primarily *weary, tired*, thence *faint-hearted, lazy, cowardly;* but it more probably comes from *loopen* (= German *laufen;* compare in English inter-*loper*.) The term *loper*, applied to deserters from South-Sea whalers, and Jack-tar's familiar land-*lubber*, are probably connected. *Looper* in old Dutch, such Dutch as honest old Peter Stuyvesant may have used, meant a running-footman, so that perhaps the idea of 'lackey' or 'flunkey' was mixed up with the term of contempt.

The third word is one used universally throughout the free states at least, and used in sober seriousness, without any slang intention, but *confined entirely to the labouring classes*. It is *boss*, for head-workman, or employer. Servants will also use it in speaking of their master. This again is good Dutch, although not immediately recognizable under its present orthography. The original Batavian is *baas*, a master-workman. In old Dutch it was *baes*, and applied particularly to the landlord of a tavern, 'mine host.'

A few other words of less importance bear the Dutch stamp, such as *cookies* for cakes, a diminutive of *koek;* and among these *cookies, krullers*, from *krullen*, to *curl*, or twist, a species of curled or twisted cake.

The Dutch, as a living language, no longer exists in the state of New York, though some few 'oldest inhabitants' may yet linger on the banks of the Hudson or the shores of Long Island, whose native tongue it was.

Considering the great number of Irish (probably 100,000), in the city of New York, it might be supposed that some Hibernicisms would have found their way into the general speech, but such is not the case. The only even *apparent* Hibernicism is the use of *will* (generally in the abbreviated form *'ll*) for *shall*, and this is just as likely to be a Gallicism.

The New Yorkers have a tendency to make the same promiscuous use of *expect* that the New Englanders do of *guess*.

New Jersey was settled by Swedes, but the original settlers have left no traces of their language, though some Swedish family names exist in that state and the adjoining one of Pennsylvania.

Some of the largest counties in Pennsylvania were settled by Germans, whose descendants at present amount to nearly one-fourth the population of the state. These Germans, who are generally designated by their neighbours as *Dutch* (Deutsche) continue to use their language to the present day. Is then, it may be asked, the common Pennsylvania dialect at all corrupted with Teutonisms? Not at all; you will never hear anything like German in the non-German part of the state, except perhaps an occasional slang phrase, such as *nix cum rous* (nichts kommt daraus), used as a shibboleth, like the French 'Goddam' and 'rosbif.' We only know of one marked Teutonism current in America, *hold on*, for stop (halt-an), and this may be only *indirectly* Teutonic; there are indications of its having come *immediately* from a nautical source. The exact contrary has taken place in Pennsylvania. The English has invaded the German, and reduced it to a sad *patois*, of which two examples taken down verbatim may suffice. A wife asks her husband, 'Was disturbt sie nun?' '*What disturbs you now?*' The good man has been *disturbt* by the loss of his dog—'was man mir coxen hat,'—*which has been coaxed away from me.*

We cross Mason and Dixon's line, the surveyors' boundary, which has been a line of demarcation to so many political and social differences. It will be borne in mind that the eastern and the older southern states are equally of English, and purely English settlement, with this important difference, however, that the former were colonized by the Puritans, the latter by the Cavaliers. Hence the Virginians and Carolinians have maintained to the present time many aristocratic pretensions, such as pedigrees and family distinctions, and, what is more to our purpose at present, a claim to superior refinement and purity of language. Whatever be the reason, it is certain that few marked and notorious peculiarities of expression at once suggest themselves as attached to the inhabitants of these states. But there may be more than one cause for this. The southern literature of all kinds is so much behind that of the north, both in quantity and quality; the southerners travel so much less, and see so much less of the outside world, that whatever peculiarities of speech they may have, find less opportunity of showing themselves. Some of these are tolerably salient as it is. They use *reckon* as the New Englanders do *guess*. They shorten the long sound of a—*stars* for stairs, and *bar* for bear,—a pronunciation shared to some extent by their fellow-citizens of the Western States,—and insert y in some cases before *ar*—*gyard* and *gyarden* for guard and garden,—a style once fashionable in England, if Sheridan's *Dictionary* is

to be trusted. Among the lower classes one sometimes meets with very queer words, such as *donocks* for stones, where we confess our etymology altogether at fault.

The small, cheap, illustrated collections of *Southern Scenes and Sketches,* which are beginning to abound in America, often give a juster idea of the popular dialect than more pretentious works of fiction. In some of these sketches, which have been highly lauded by southern periodicals for their correct pictures of local manners, passages occur now and then which read very like a description of the Cannibal Islands by one of the head-chiefs; but their value is none the less for philological purposes.

On arriving at the 'Great West,' the inquirer is forced to hesitate; the materials for his investigation are abundant, but they nearly all encroach on the forbidden ground of slang. It may almost be doubted whether, in this very new country, there is any generally recognised standard of refinement and propriety in language more than in other matters. There are districts where it would hardly be an exaggeration to say, that every prominent person has his own private vocabulary. The hunter-legislator, David Crockett,* who flourished some twenty years ago, a brave but eccentric personage, was a specimen of this class; the well-known 'Go a-head!' was one of his inventions. The infinite variety of western phraseology embraces every sort of expression, from the clumsiest vulgarity to the most poetic metaphor; from unintelligible jargon to pregnant sententiousness. Sometimes it luxuriates in elongation of words and reduplication of syllables, as if the mother-English were not sufficiently strong and expressive,—*cantankerous* for rancorous, *salvagerous* for savage. The barbarous cant word, *tee-total,* was doubtless thus coined by some western speaker at a 'temperance' meeting. Sometimes, it derives from its associations of forest and prairie life, picturesque and graphic phrases, such as *making tracks, drawing a bee-line,* and the primitive salutation 'stranger!'—another unintentional Hellenism which carries the hearer back to Homer's time. And sometimes again it degenerates into a fondness for words of all-work, that seemingly betoken equal poverty of thought and language. They use or abuse *calculate* as the New-Englanders do *guess.* The verb *fix,* which has more than its legitimate share of work all over the Union,

* It has been asserted since Crockett's death that he did not write all his own books, nor say all his own sayings, but that most of them were made for him by a mischievous and mirth-loving fellow congressman.

they drive unmercifully, and have introduced its participial noun *fixing* to a commanding position in the conversational vocabulary. In some places *tote* expresses every variety of fetching, lending, or carrying; and *truck* every commodity that can be subjected to the process of *toting*. There is a familiar legend of an English traveller who, on hearing Sambo directed to 'tote the gentleman's horse to the barn (stable), and give him some truck,' not unnaturally concluded that *truck* was the Kentuckian for hay or oats. But soon another Sambo was ordered to 'tote in some truck for the fire,' and appeared with an armful of pine-wood. The traveller, wondering if the horses of the country were *lignivorous*, appealed to the judge or colonel who acted as landlord for information, and was comforted by the satisfactory assurance that 'truck meant everything in those parts.'*

It is not certain whether the term *help* for servant, often set down as a general Americanism, but in fact scarcely known in the middle states, is of western or New-England origin. It is generally used in both sections of the country.

Since Louisiana was colonized by the French, and several smaller settlements were made by them all along the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, we might suppose that the phraseology of the west and south-west would contain Gallicisms. Very few such traces, however, can be detected, although the French language continues to be spoken in New Orleans, half of which is virtually a French town to this day. Now and then a French local name may be recognised, in a sad state of dilapidation. *Bob Ruly* for *bois brulé* is not surpassed by any of the most notorious nautical transformations. Sometimes a slang verb discloses its Gallic origin through a grotesque metamorphosis, *e.g.*, *semprone*, to retire, to disappear, from *se-promener*. But these instances are comparatively rare. Nor has the sonorous Castilian, despite the settlement of Florida, the traffic with Cuba, and even the temporary

---

* Perhaps some Americans might be able to supply a pendant to this story from their English experience. We know of a case in point. Not longer ago than the middle of the last half-century, a tourist in some rustic locality (in Wiltshire, we believe) was asked by the chambermaid of the village inn, 'if she should *tine* his fire.' He answered at a venture in the affirmative, and she *lit* it. *Tining* the fire meant *lighting* it. When about to quit the room, she asked 'if she should *tine* the door?' 'No, for Heaven's sake!' exclaimed the startled guest, and Maritornes walks away, *leaving the door open*. To *tine* the door meant to *shut* it. Surely this is equal to any case of *fixing*.

conquest of Mexico, left more numerous traces. One word we believe, and one only, was brought back from the Halls of Montezuma,—the imperative *vamos*, which, converted as is usual in such cases, into an infinitive, has become fairly embodied in slang American, and even of late gained a precarious footing in English light literature.

Besides expressions of sectional origin or usage, there are many to which it is difficult to assign any original locality, their use being pretty general all over the country. The most striking of those current in good society have already been given; but many others are to be found in less refined conversation. Commercial and nautical metaphors occupy, as might be expected, a conspicuous place among them. Some of these are of recent growth and approaching to slang, as *posted up* on a subject for *well-informed* on it; others of older standing and more general employment, as *clear out* for *go away* (generally used in the imperative = Be off!) We also find in the more popular kinds of writing, many loosenesses of expression which it is hard to bring under any general rules, but which may be illustrated by a single example:—in classical English, to *conclude* expresses the drawing an inference, the result of which inference may be expressed by *decide* or *determine*—'He *concluded* from what he had heard that it would be best to do so and so; accordingly he decided to do it.' But the Americans, confusing or throwing the two ideas together, say, 'He concluded to do it.' Instances of this want of precision are very common in the newspapers.

We have endeavoured, in our investigation, to keep clear as far as possible of slang words and phrases; first, because it would be manifestly unfair to judge of the *language* of any people by their *argot*, and, secondly, because it would be impossible, within any moderate limits, to do justice to the subject. The field of American slang is literally boundless. Every state, every city, has its own flash vocabulary. But it is in the political world that this tendency to cant phrases most developes itself. To enumerate these novelties would require, not merely a dictionary, but an almanack or annual register, so frequent are the additions made to the list. Every new party, every new modification of an old party, is bound to have at least one new name, either assumed by itself or attached to it by its opponents. Every distinguished or notorious public character enriches the vocabulary with some of his favourite fancy expressions.

Before we take leave of our subject, two questions present themselves: First, Have the Americans made any valuable

additions to, or improvements in, the common language; and, if so, should, or will such additions and improvements be generally adopted in the parent country?

In answering this question, we must separate the additions from the alterations, and make a discrimination between two classes of Americanisms. One consists of new words, formed to express either old or new ideas with greater clearness or convenience than any words already existing. In this respect it is quite possible that the language may really have been enriched from transatlantic sources. *A priori* considerations would lead to the admission of such a possibility. It is only in accordance with the analogy of other languages and with its own experience, so to speak, that many new words should be introduced into the English language in the course of three quarters of a century. It is but natural that a certain proportion of these should come from America, if we grant that the Americans have any authority in the premises. But the English public appears practically to have granted this, in admitting many American works as classics of the English language. Indeed, this branch of our question may be considered as already answered. American words have settled down into and become established in the language. *Talented* is a familiar example. It is of little use to inveigh against such words—there they are in full possession, and cannot be turned out. We all know what an outcry the polite writers of Addison's time made against that new-fangled and vulgar expression, *the mob*. But the expression took its place in the language for all that.

As to the second class of peculiarities, many of them purely conversational, those in which the Americans express the same idea differently from the English, we apprehend the practice of both countries will remain pretty much as it is. Possibly, some of the American expressions are in themselves, abstractly and philosophically considered, better than the English; but this is not all that the *jus et norma loquendi* demands. Every language contains idioms and phrases philosophically reprehensible, as is clearly shown by the fact that the most ordinary phrases of one language become unmeaning or ludicrous absurdities when translated *literally* into another. All languages contain terms which have nothing but usage to plead in their favour. In English conversation, the panegyrical adjective of all-work is *nice*, in America it is *fine*. Both people often use their pet adjective inappropriately; perhaps the Americans do so in fewer cases than the English. But even if this could be mathematically proved, it is not

probable that the English would give up their word to adopt the American. The American use of *sick* (= ill) is certainly more correct according to old models than the limited sense attached to the word in modern English conversation; still, it is not likely that the English public will change its neologism for the American archaism. Or, to take a mere question of pronunciation, it is not the general English practice to sound the *h* of the inital *wh*; Scotchmen, and, perhaps, some north-country men, aspirate the letter, but the ordinary practice of good society makes no difference in sound, for instance, between *witch* and *which*. In America, on the contrary, it is the universal practice to aspirate the *h* in this combination; the negroes are the only persons who do not; and not to aspirate the *h* of an initial *wh* is therefore considered an Africanism or negroism in America. Now, abstractly and philosophically considered, the American practice is doubtless the better of the two, inasmuch as it distinguishes between various words of otherwise similar sound; still, while the practice of the best English society remains what it now is, to sound the aspirate in such words will always be an Americanism or a Scotticism, or at any rate, something contrary to English usage.

As to the more extensive and ambitious attempts made at general reforms of the language, such as Noah Webster's unsightly and inconsistent orthographical innovations, they have already been scouted by all the best authorities on that side of the Atlantic where they originated.

The other question is, Does the supremacy of the English language in the United States run any serious risk? Considering the great, and every year increasing number of continental emigrants who bring with them their languages and associations,—considering that the Americans of Anglo-Saxon descent do not exceed *one-third* of the whole population, if indeed, they amount to that—is there no danger that, in course of time, the English tongue may be compelled to yield a part of its ground, and be in some regions, at least, supplanted? And may not present or future tendencies to widen the political separation of the two countries have some further effect on this, their great common bond of union?

This question, in all its branches, may be fearlessly answered in the negative. Dreams of a new or a different tongue did indeed haunt the imagination of some more zealous than wise patriots in the earlier period of American history. It is still on record that a legislator seriously proposed that the young republic should complete its independence by adopting a diffe-

rent language from that of the mother-country, 'the Greek for instance,' which proposition was summarily extinguished by a suggestion of a fellow representative, that 'it would be more convenient for us to keep the language as it was, and *make the English speak Greek.*' Various speculators, too, at different times, proposed plans for the greater or less modification of the language, by recasting the orthography, Italianizing the terminations, &c., but these crotchets were generally received much as the 'phonetic movement' has been in England; their chief use was to furnish material for jesters, and they have long ago been generally forgotten. It is probable that Noah Webster's vagaries, many of which he renounced himself before his death, would by this time have shared a similar fate, had not his dictionary unfortunately happened to become a matter of commercial speculation. Hence they have obtained a temporary circulation among a certain class of writers and publishers, but have always failed to obtain a footing in the best quarters. And even if *universally* adopted they would be no more to the whole body and structure of the language than an unsightly wart on a man's hand, or pimple on his face, is to his whole physical frame. As to foreign intruders, we may partly infer their destiny from the fate of the languages which existed in the colonies simultaneously with, or even anterior to the English. The Swedish of New Jersey, and the Spanish of Florida, have vanished, leaving not a trace behind. The Dutch, so long the current tongue of the 'New Netherlands,' has disappeared from New York, bequeathing to its usurping successor a legacy of some half-dozen words. The French has held its ground in half of one city. But the Creoles of New Orleans have only preserved the language of their ancestors by forming a peculiar society, and almost isolating themselves from the rest of the natives. Whenever they have wished to gain influence and power among the latter, their adoption of the English tongue has been the first requisite. And the same holds good with regard to more recent emigrants. The doughty Soulè would never have had the opportunity of exercising his valour upon M. Turgot, had he confined his oratorical display to the idiom of his fatherland. Wherever, in the larger Atlantic cities, a society of French emigrants exists, the same isolation among themselves, and absence of general influence, are perceptible. They have left on the language of the country but a few trivial impressions, such as were mentioned in the earlier part of this essay. And the attempts occasionally made in New York to establish French as the current medium of fashionable

conversation have only succeeded in rendering ridiculous those who made them.

There remains the German—and this is, indeed, the only language that can have the slightest pretension to rival the English. The amount of German emigration to America has of late been excessive. The German settlers in the city of New York must now approach in numbers to one-seventh of the entire population. Whole districts of the city are peopled by them; in street after street you see only German signs outside of the shops, and hear only Teutonic accents inside of the houses. Several German newspapers have been established, and some of these can boast a very large circulation, even according to the high standard of American newspaper circulation. But is it probable that the Teutonic element will continue to develop itself at this rate, or even that the present state of things will continue without a contrary modification? We think not. We have seen that where the German language was originally established—in Pennsylvania—it was so far from making any encroachments on the English, that the English sensibly encroached on it. True, the language has remained, after a fashion, but the descendants of the original settlers have preserved it at the expense of much loss both of power and progress. They are notoriously behind their Anglo-Saxon neighbours, and the readiness with which they are duped in all public and political matters, has become a standing joke. The present race of emigrants are more energetic and more ambitious. But any further attempts on their part, or that of their descendants, to preserve their peculiar language and customs in the midst of a different population, would infallibly end by intensifying and exasperating that not altogether unfounded jealousy of foreigners which has already given rise to grave political agitations, and will probably lead to grave political results. If the German citizens of America wish to take that part in the affairs of the country to which their numbers, their abilities, and their education entitle them, the first condition will be their adoption of the general speech of the country.

We conclude, then, that the supremacy of the English language in the United States is menaced by no serious danger. With such comparatively trifling modifications as we have been discussing, it will continue to be *the* language of the greatest power on the great Western Continent. And surely this ought to be a source of no small satisfaction to Englishmen. Among the many glories that England has to boast of, it is not, and will not be, one of the least, that she, more successful in this

respect than the other nations of Europe, has transmitted and permanently established beyond the broad ocean, liberal institutions, evangelical religion, and a language which, whatever harshness of sound or clumsiness of inflection may disfigure it, however inferior it may be in harmony or musical capability to the more liquid dialects of the sunny south, has been the vehicle of many of the greatest productions of human reason and human genius, the language of Milton and Shakspeare, of Macaulay and Tennyson—one and the same with the language of Irving, Bryant, and Longfellow.

C. A. B.

NOTES ON MODERN GEOGRAPHY.

IT must be a surprise to those persons who have not watched the recent developments of geography, but draw their opinions of its scope and character from the meagre treatises of bygone days, to observe how advanced is its present position among the liberal sciences, and how steadily on the increase is the recognition of its value in the eyes of the world at large.

If, indeed, we consider in turn the whole round of those scientific pursuits with which persons of thoughtful minds are glad to associate themselves in a more or less intimate connexion, we shall scarcely be able to point out any one of them that meets with a more general sympathy, or that rests on a sounder basis of popular support than that of geography. Thus, on applying the test that lies readiest at hand, of taking up the 'Transactions' of the several learned societies, and analysing the lists of their associates, we find none that can compare with the Geographical in the weight, eminence, and varied attainments of the persons whose names they contain. Nay, more, the following quotation may be received as evidence that Geographical Societies of other countries enjoy a reputation equal to that which they have earned in England. It is taken from an address delivered by the President of the French Society, shortly after its establishment in 1822, where he recounts with a natural satisfaction the progress it had already made, and expresses himself in the following terms: 'Our society contains men learned in every science, persons of intelligence from every country whose tastes and labours tend to the increase of geographical knowledge. There are astronomers, well-informed tourists who have travelled through distant lands, experienced navigators who have faced all the dangers of the sea, generals who have conducted war, highly-informed engineers, skilful geographers, naturalists, men learned in languages, statesmen, economists, and merchants.'

And it is reasonable to expect that such should be the case, since geography has every claim to be ranked as a thoroughly popular science. I mean, that the subjects on which it treats are of so remarkable a variety, that some of them, at least, must appeal to the tastes of every person; and, again, that its territory is not fenced off from the casual inquirer by too thorny a barrier of hard names and puzzling classifications, which compel him to follow a tedious path of dull study before it be possible to reach any free eminence or open spot, whence the nature of its beauties may be fairly seen and justly understood.

Few persons are willing to slave at the elements of a strange science for which they feel no natural taste, as even those whose minds are thoughtful and cultivated find little inducement to do so in the mere hope of their interest becoming so far engaged in their new studies as to tempt them on to a steadier course of inquiry. Creation is thronged with matters which solicit the attention of every earnest mind, and it is not to be expected that a science whose beauties are hidden and hard to get at, should enlist so great a show of popular sympathy as another whose objects are of no less interest, but whose stores are patent and accessible.

It is owing to these causes that geographers have enlisted a class of recruits, and most useful ones, too, from men who find themselves aliens to other sciences because, when circumstances might have permitted their doing so, they had never initiated themselves into their elements by preparatory studies. Of these are missionaries, emigrants, and officers on foreign service, who, feeling a vacancy and a want of intellectual occupation, which the duties and the society of their secluded homes are insufficient to relieve, are too ready to give up their moments of leisure in furthering any pursuit, if assured that their labours would be appreciated by the world as having a practical or a scientific value. Now, geography is always a field open to such persons, especially in the wilder countries; they have only to observe, and inquire, and record, and in proportion as they have attained to an accurate and common-sense knowledge of the place they live in,—its climate, its statistics, and its capabilities,—in that same degree will they be qualified to add a useful item to the great store of sound geographical literature, on the basis of which the wide generalizations of professed geographers can alone be built. And again, to men who have been urged abroad by a mere love of sport and adventure, when the keenness of desire is somewhat cloyed, and the long hours of travel become monotonous and wearying, geography is a legitimate and most absorbing source of occu-

pation. One question leads on to another, inquiries open out new matters of interest, and so great a variety of objects rise up on all sides which invite investigation and further progress, that a spirit and a life is infused into the undertaking able to carry it across many difficulties, where apathy would have succumbed to disaster.

The study of geography, from that high point of view from which alone it should be undertaken, is a peculiarly liberalising pursuit. It professes to reward those who follow it with the same expanded ideas that the best of travellers have gained for themselves by years of toil and slow accumulations. It links the scattered sciences together, and gives to each of them a meaning and a significance of which they are barren when they stand alone, and supplies a certain coherence to the scantiest fragments of information.

To the student of any science it affords means whereby he may learn to sketch in his imagination a truthful foreground and background to the special objects of his study; for it is the province of geography to supply those links which unite every object in Creation to the forms of nature which surround it—which are essential to its being understood aright, and in the keen appreciation of which, the great charm of natural science chiefly resides.

Can the reader, whether he be versed in zoology, botany, or geology, not call up to his mind many subjects of his favourite science to which geographical sketches, such as the following, would give both life and support? They are among the pictures that Tennyson hangs in his *Palace of Art*.

> One showed an iron coast and angry waves:
> You seemed to hear them climb and fall,
> And roar, rock-thwarted, under bellowing caves
> Beneath the windy wall.
>
> And one, a full-fed river, winding slow
> By herds upon an endless plain,
> The ragged rims of thunder brooding low,
> With shadow-streaks of rain.
>
> And one a foreground, black with stones and slags,
> Beyond, a line of heights, and higher,
> All barred with long white cloud, the scornful crags,
> And highest, snow and fire.

But what *is* geography? To this we will reply as plainly as we can. In the first place, it treats of much more than latitudes, longitudes, territorial divisions, heights of mountains, and so forth. Its subject matter is more than a collection of

dry facts, of statistics of measurement, and topography, whose worth lies in their separate and individual value, and not in their mutual relations. It is more than a mass of records compiled and indexed in a gazetteer. All this is the raw material out of which geography has been developed into the position of a liberal science. Until very late years, much of the dignity of geography was believed to consist in its attempted approach to mathematical accuracy, and there still remain some persons who seem to think that dignity compromised if its teachings be made the vehicle of less precise knowledge than falls within the special province of the surveyor. Like the other physical sciences, geography is but of recent growth, and she has not long acquired the position in which she is now seated. Up to the present generation, it was not possible even for master minds to unite the scattered acquisitions of the several sciences into one comprehensive system, to show their mutual relations one to another, and to trace the harmonious way in which all the features of the earth are organized, and how every object has its appointed post in the one mighty scheme. But now, since the writings of Maltebrun, of Ritter, and of Humboldt, the case is very different.

Geographers of the modern school assert, with one voice, that there is much more within their legitimate reach than a mere collection of meagre facts about the earth's surface, and that, instead of such a collection being the goal of their labours, it is in fact but one part of the basis of their science. Far be it from geographers, as such, to grasp at more than what an ordinary mind can thoroughly embrace, and, still more so, to abandon scrupulous accuracy for the sake of vague and alluring generalities; but it is reasonable that students should endeavour to learn the earth and describe its features, not only as surveyors, but with the full light of whatever knowledge they may possess, whether, like Herodotus, it be in a plain, practical, common-sense way, or, like Humboldt, with the whole power of his stores of learning. A vast insight into a broad, but accurate knowledge of the world is within the scope of any man who is well grounded in the elements of the more important sciences; and though the more he may know of them the better, it never can be justly insisted that he should have attained to advanced proficiency before he can acquire a right to make that use of them which is indicated above. It is for special students in the several sciences to discover laws and natural classifications, which are thenceforward open to the geographer, as well as to any one else, to accept and make use of; but he is not expected to engage in the research through which these laws were

originally discovered, nor to load his memory with vast masses of uncriticised facts, whence new laws and principles are yet destined to be educed. Geography should borrow from all the sciences in order to link them together and to prevent their isolation, but she in no way professes to embrace and absorb them. Such a thing as a universal science may indeed exist, of which all special matters are only fragments and broken lights, but her domain is far above the humble flight of geographers. *They* do not soar as explorers towards the first simple laws of nature, that they may deduce from them a *rationale* of all her phenomena; they only profess to record these phenomena such as they exist in various combinations all over the globe, whether in obvious and instructive harmony, or in offering problems that remain to be solved, some by students in one science, some by those in another. They try to describe the world in its entirety, not superficially on the one hand, nor with infinite minuteness on the other, but with the bold, graphic, accurate strokes of a well-educated and observant artist.

By following a system of research and record on the configuration, climate, and products of every country, the inquirers of each age have so far added to the existing stores of information that their predecessors had bequeathed to them, and so great has been the more recent progress of geographical discovery throughout the world, that it has, at length, become feasible to systematize the science, and by uniting together unnumbered patches of information, to educe something like a consistent whole, and to shadow forth that which is really and truly geography—the form and complete features of the entire world. There are few isolated peculiarities now left to perplex the student; each fact is becoming grouped with its connexions, and begins to fall into its place among grand and regular series. The very winds and waves are ceasing to appear capricious, and acknowledge general laws. The physical features that geography has power to display form, indeed, a majestic picture. The wide blue ocean, heaved by tidal waves and running in a thousand currents; the vast continents, here crowding in snow-bound masses round the northern poles, there separating asunder in promontories that stretch their narrowing capes to the southward—these, with all their accidents of outline and surface, great bays, vast ridges, converging valleys that conduct the ceaseless outpourings of countless rivers, form but a framework that has to be clothed with the many-tinted dress of nature. It is a sketch that lies ready to be filled up with details, but yet in such a manner as neither to crowd it nor to give greater prominence

to one class of objects, in the treatment of them, than they actually possess in nature. For the geographer has to advance step after step until he has learnt the distribution of all the leading forms of organic matter over the surface of the globe, and recognised the harmonious order in which they exist with relation to one another and to the land itself they inhabit. He has next to examine the whole with relation to man, and to trace in broad outlines the effect of the geographical element upon the history and progress of his race. His task will have been well performed according as the ideas which he may have acquired for himself are truthful and of a just proportion to one another, rather than as they are brilliant or numerous.

It is with a deep persuasion of the claims of geography on the attention of all thoughtful persons, and in the belief that it is not alien to the character of an essay like this, to attempt to give some shape and body to the vague notion of that science which is entertained by too many of us, that the following pages are written. It is possible that they may point out matter of sufficient interest to take root in the thoughts of some casual reader, and prompt him on to further and to productive inquiry.

There are two distinct methods by which what is known about the earth may be kept on record; the one is by treatises, the other by maps, globes, and models; and to these a third may fairly be added, namely, the system of Geographical Societies; for these, besides serving as depositories for manuscripts, charts, and publications, are centres with which the majority of travelled men are in more or less intimate communication, and through means of which personal information on any particular subject can readily be obtained.

Geographical writings are very numerous, but we are only entering upon an age in which systematic treatises of any real comprehensiveness have become possible; for it is but of late years that our general knowledge of the world has even approached to accuracy and completeness. Questions of meteorology require that steady series of observations should be carried on simultaneously, at very many points, on the face of the world, before it be possible to decide them; and not only have we been without the necessary organization to accomplish this task, but half a century ago the instrumental machinery for doing it was for the most part uncontrived. Even until a few years back, although the ocean was ploughed by thousands of our ships, and every facility for observation thereby afforded, we had no adequate knowledge of the currents of wind in different parts of our globe. Yet, by learning their directions, navigators could have ensured at any time a great

diminution in the length of their average passages; and we know that each additional day spent in a voyage is a matter of tangible expense. It appeared to lookers-on that if there were one problem in physical science more obviously waiting to be solved, or more at hand to the inquirer than another, it was this. The objection of 'cui bono' was never urged by the owners or the captains of ships, as the solution of the question would have been a matter of immediate and calculable profit. Yet, such is the indolence of men, and so much more congenial is it to dream idly than to be up and working, that the vast opportunities of inquiry during numberless voyages had, till within most recent times, been left barren of result. The trade winds had been understood for more than a hundred years,—their regularity and that of the monsoons were absolutely depended upon; yet no general attempt was made to extend this partial knowledge of aerial currents to its widest extent, by making daily sets of observations on board every ship afloat that was manned by reliable officers, and combining the facts they had observed into one general system. This at length is partly done, and in a fair way of being completed; for which we are mainly indebted to Lieutenant Maury: and, if we measure our voyages by time and not by miles, the distances across the ocean are already docked of a very important fraction of their length.

These same remarks might, with little variation, be extended to the currents of the sea, which is no stagnant pool, whose surface only is lashed into breakers by the passing wind, or calmly heaves and subsides under the tidal attraction of the moon,—but a stirring scene of busy and incessant change, a complex system of regular currents and driftings that travel from Mexico to Spitzbergen, from Australia to the Cape, and on to Brazil, urging forward or retarding in their voyage the vessels that sail upon them. These have but very recently been explored in anything like the complete form in which they are now to be seen mapped out by Mr. Findlay, and turned to account by the navigator. We might greatly add to the list of subjects of which we are now only beginning to have a comprehensive knowledge, although it is impossible to overlook them in a geographical review of the globe, however sketchy that review may be: unless we are content to study geography in the barren and fragmentary form against which, at the beginning of this essay, we so strongly protested. The novelty of the science, and the vast extent of its subject matter, is the excuse why so few simple and comprehensive works on geography have yet appeared; and if, as we have shown, it was impossible a few years

back to draw up a general account of the great elementary features of the world, it may also be easily conceived that our knowledge has been far too little advanced to admit of encyclopædias being compiled, in which the geography of every country should be fully set forth, and in its main objects exhausted; but most excellent digests of what is known exist in Fullarton's *Gazetteer*, Blackie's *Gazetteer*, and Knight's *Cyclopædia*.

The province of maps is independent of that of treatises, for maps picture to us those countries in miniature on which it is the office of books to make comments and to generalize. Writing is a poor way of conveying topographical information; it is impossible that a string of descriptive fragments can ever convey the same perfect notion of a wide area that is attained to by throwing on it a single comprehensive glance. But books have a province of their own; and their usefulness would be little diminished to the geographer, even if he had a perfect map, or if his keenness of vision and the position of his study window could be made such as to command the whole world in a single view. Philosophy begins when the collection of isolated facts is sufficiently advanced; and the object of the map-maker is, by drawing the world in miniature, to supply, under an available form, one great part of that groundwork of facts upon which the science and the philosophy of geography is immediately based. But although when a country has been thoroughly surveyed and accurately mapped out, books have no occasion to meddle with mere description, yet in imperfectly known countries, the case is exceptional, and the very cause which makes books unable to convey such copious information as maps, gives them an advantage in recording that which is in itself fragmentary. Whatever is drawn upon a map becomes, from the nature of the case, invested with not only a local relation to every other object represented in it, but also with a size and a shape of its own, and acquires a definiteness which may be wholly unwarranted by the character of the statements to which the knowledge even of its existence is due. Take an instance:—we may have heard on excellent authority that in the heart of a certain country are two populous towns, separated by a range of bold hills, and yet be able to ascertain nothing more. Now this is a piece of geographical information well worthy of being recorded, as having value in itself, and as affording a means of developing some other chance gleam of information into more complete knowledge; but it is impossible to represent this, and no more than this, in a map. If the range of mountains be drawn at all, a certain geographical position must be

assigned to it; it must be drawn with a definite breadth, length, and direction, about all of which the map-maker is entirely ignorant; and the position of the towns must be put at guess, not only with reference to the rest of the map, but also to one another, and to the mountain range that separates them. If the district were thoroughly known, the map would show upon its face all those geographical relations which pages of laboured description would never exhaust; but being only partially understood, the draughtsman cannot follow the method of a narrator, and be simply silent upon those things of which he is in ignorance, but he is obliged to admit of great blanks in his work, and to consent to leave unrecorded a large part of that which he really knows. Therefore, in the first infancy of geography, maps play a less prominent part than in its more advanced stages; for in attempting to show a little they are obliged to assert too much; and if they endeavour to be explicit, they seriously mislead. Nay, more, the geographer may be, and usually is, in possession of many statements that are contradictory in important points, and these may be stated in treatises, but could never be recorded in a single map; for if it were attempted, the sheet would be scrawled over in endless confusion. A map must represent the conclusion at which the maker of it has, to the best of his judgment arrived, but it does not and cannot give the evidence on which that conclusion is founded.

In all map-making two distinct crafts are required: the one is to survey and draw the outline, the other to fill it up with whatever may give life to the picture—whether it be with conventional symbols, or colouring, or those half profile views of prominent landmarks that ancient geographers so much delighted in, and to which in these present days there seems a tendency to return. Now, of these two parts, the first is thoroughly scientific; and while it requires good instruments and mathematical proficiency to be undertaken at all, it can be followed with certain success by any qualified person who chooses to engage in the labour. The other is of a totally different character; it is purely an art and not a science; it requires a union of artistic skill with great ingenuity, and there seems no assignable limit to the success it may hereafter achieve. These two branches stand to each other in somewhat the same kind of relationship that perspective does to drawing. The one being a matter of dry, accurate, and laborious science, which is the better for being kept in the background, but which can never be disregarded; while the other is a life-like portraiture, the production of which is the end and object of the whole undertaking. It is in this last branch that the great

majority of map-makers up to the present time, are so remarkably unsuccessful. There is quite sufficient accuracy of outline, for general purposes, in the maps of the civilized world; but with very rare exceptions do these maps attempt to present a picture like that which meets a traveller's eye when standing on a commanding mountain peak in a clear day. But before pursuing this question further, it will be well to consider awhile the work that lies before the geographer, for we shall be less tempted to exact too much the more clearly we perceive how vast it is.

The great features of physical geography can be recorded on a map of a very small size in itself, and quite infinitesimal with regard to that of the huge sphere it portrays. On a small sheet of paper there is room to indicate every navigable river, every spacious harbour, every great mountain chain. Lines of equal temperature may be drawn, the zones in which different groups of animal and vegetable life flourish may be sketched out, and room may be found for describing with a bold and accurate touch all other matters of a similar description, such as we find already done for us in the well-known atlases of physical geography; but when we desire to make ourselves acquainted with a particular country, and wish to learn its localities and home features, a map on a far larger scale becomes requisite, and it is a matter of some interest to determine what that scale should really be. Every geographer professes to look forward to a time—a far distant one—in which we shall be in possession of a so-called accurate map or model of the entire earth. But what is meant by the word *accurate?*—into what degree of detail should a reasonably perfect map be expected to enter? In fine, what should be the scale upon which it ought to be constructed? It were absurd, on the one hand, to desire that every bush and every ditch should be marked down, and on the other hand we assuredly want more than a mere indication of each woodland and each navigable river; but these are wide extremes, and where between them does that mean lie which is to be the goal of our endeavours? The principle may perhaps be accepted as follows:—that every feature which influences aspect, shelter, or means of communication should have a place on the map, that the scale should be of such a size as, generally speaking, to include every object whose magnitude and importance is sufficient to secure permanence, and to have earned for it a definite place in the recollection of its neighbours, or, what answers pretty nearly to so vague a definition, every place or thing large enough to deserve a name. The scale should therefore be sufficiently ample to include brooks, crags, and

clumps of trees. Smaller isolated objects may easily enough be represented by a dot, should they happen to be placed in a conspicuous position, and from that cause to attain importance as a landmark, which from their mere size they would not have merited. Now, as a traveller proceeds on his road, and studies the country that spreads wide away on either side, he will obtain a very accurate knowledge of all that lies within two miles of him, when the day is clear and the light such as to throw the undulations of the ground into relief. At that distance, even the minute details of the rigging of a ship will stand out clear against the sky; objects three feet across, such as distant chimneys, cease to be mere lines, and have a sensible breadth; the very trunks and boughs of trees may be visible, and their foliage seen to retain much of an individual character. Now, if the landscape, viewed at a distance of two miles, be drawn exactly as it would appear if projected upon a sheet of paper held ten inches from the eye, (which may be assumed as the distance at which a student would pore over his map), it follows as a necessary consequence that the scale of that projection would be as ten inches to two miles.

It is considered in practice that a delicately executed map of the scale of one inch to a mile, such as our ordnance surveys of England, is quite large enough to include that amount of detail which was claimed a few lines back as essential to a good map of any locality which we wish to study for general purposes. Five times that size was shown to be large enough for making a perfect picture as well as a map. Furnished with these data, let us consider what is the amount of work which has to be accomplished before geographers can become possessed of a map of the whole world, even on the first-mentioned scale. The superficies of the dry land on the globe is about fifty millions of square miles, and consequently the space over which it would have to be drawn would cover fifty million square inches of map, or a square area of five hundred feet in the side, which is a space larger than Portman-square; and a globe representing the earth, built on this same scale, would be more than two hundred yards in diameter. By dwelling awhile upon these considerations, and conceiving these acres of surface, scrawled over with countless lines and touches, each of which requires to be accurately placed to less than the breadth of a needle, we shall gain some idea of the immense variety of hill and dale, and variously configured surface on the broad expanse of this great world of which the geographer has to take cognizance, and with which he is now successfully grappling,—each tiny group of which in habitable regions no larger than a wafer on the surface of the map, is capable of

forming a home neighbourhood, with, it may be, its garden, its clump of trees, its neighbouring hillock and brook; within whose narrow bounds whole families may live and die; with which all their associations of boyish days and manhood may be bound up, and in which they may read ample proofs of the presence and goodness of God in the harmony of His countless works that throng even that insignificant fraction of the earth.

The labour that is expended in accurately mapping a large tract of country is enormous. It is proverbially 'a work of ages and of nations;' for not only does it require means far beyond those at the command of a single individual, but it literally seems to take up a longer time to complete than is within the compass of a single life. We have experience of a generation passing by before the observations were made, calculated, and tested, the details filled up, the whole engraved upon plates, and the results issued to the public: for our own ordnance maps have dragged their tedious course along for more than half a century; they were begun in 1796, and a large part of them are still unissued.

The greater part of the surveyor's trouble consists in determining the position of the principal points with scrupulous nicety, for everything depends upon their accuracy. They are cardinal positions, and an error in any one of them is liable to run through the whole map, and lead to contradictions and uncertainties in some distant part of it. Hence, months of labour may be wasted if one of these proves to be incorrect; but if, on the other hand, these alone are perfectly right, and if the details of any district should have been erroneously mapped, it may be resurveyed, and the new plan will be found to fit accurately into the place of the old one. Once done, they are done for ever; but if carelessly laid down, the foundation of the map is irregular, and the whole superstructure becomes distorted and strained awry. The consequence is, that large instruments and long series of observations are brought to bear on their determination, and the work must continue until the positions assigned to them are found to agree sufficiently well with the result of more than one set of measurements and triangulation, and also with their latitudes and longitudes as learnt from the stars. Now, except in parts of Europe and North America, India and the Cape, this has never been done, and perhaps two-thirds of the globe is unmapped, with even a distant and approximative degree of accuracy, while the vast areas of Central Africa and Australia are entirely matters of guess-work.

In childhood we have perfect trust in all that our seniors

tell us; as boys, we consider all that is in print as infallible; and up to much later years do we put an equal and undoubted faith in our maps. But this, too, is doomed to perish utterly on the first shock of experience. There is usually as great a difference in geographical value between an ordnance map and, it may be, a beautifully engraved, popular one, as there is in poetical merit between a copy of Shakspeare and a gorgeously-bound volume of the vilest trash that was ever published by aid of titled interest and half-extorted subscriptions.

It would be quite foreign to the objects of an essay like this to enter at any length into the methods by which surveys of the highest order of accuracy are carried on, but it may be observed that while common triangulating and ordinary star observations, such as travellers depend upon, are very simple matters in theory, accurate surveying calls forth all the resources and the refinements of high mathematics, and is therefore comparatively rare. A good sextant, and a practised observer can, without much difficulty, find his latitude to nine or ten seconds, that is to say, to three hundred yards; the best instruments and most skilled observers will give the latitude to about one second, or thirty-three yards. Between these two classes of work there is all the difference in the world; the first can be managed by the rules of plane trigonometry, or without trigonometry at all, by simply protracting the angles upon the map, and marking the points of intersection made by the lines which form them; but in the second case, where the greatest possible accuracy is aimed at, a huge coil of difficulties is introduced. In the first place, the whole matter is taken out of the domain of plane mathematics, and put into the cumbrous formula of spherical trigonometry, because in accurate work, the globular form of the earth becomes far too sensible in its effects on the results to be disregarded in the calculations. Again, the instrument itself is mistrusted, and allowances have to be made for the errors of its workmanship, which must be found out by artfully contrasted observations, of such a character as to eliminate or define them. And finally, the varying effect of refraction affords a serious difficulty;—in fact, the matter becomes an exceedingly troublesome problem.

It may seem scarcely credible to some persons that, huge as is this earth, three hundred paces should take us so far round its shoulder (if such an expression be permitted) as to make a perceptible difference in the appearance of the heavens when measured by a small hand-instrument sufficiently light and simple for a traveller to take with him in the rudest

expedition; yet such is the case, and no traveller should be unacquainted with its use. The moon and sun are each of them, in round numbers, thirty minutes of a degree in diameter, and therefore, if a person started from his home and travelled thirty geographical miles (about thirty-five English miles) southwards, he would find the polar star to have sunk through a space equal to the breadth of the moon; and the sun, at midday, to have risen in the heavens through a space equal to its own diameter. The entire vault of the sky would appear to have shifted to that extent. New stars would have come into sight in the south, old ones would have sunk below the horizon to the north. This is, indeed, a palpable difference, which the rudest of contrivances would make evident; for the length of the shadow of an obelisk, or that of a stick planted upright in the ground, would be perceptibly altered. The experiment may be made in what is really a practicable way of finding rough latitudes; namely, by suspending a knotted string with a stone at its end, and letting it dip in a puddle of water, both to check its oscillations and to ensure a level surface, whereon the length of the shadow between the two knots can easily be measured. Now, that a hand-instrument should be capable of dividing the apparent diameter of the moon into about thirty parts is nothing very remarkable; and that the power of the telescope and lens, added to the marvellous workmanship of the present day, should divide it sixfold more minutely, or to spaces of ten seconds, which is a little more than three hundred yards, is easily credible.

It may be added that the sextant, which is everything to the sailor, is scarcely less important to the traveller by land; its thorough efficacy in every way, its simplicity, lightness, and strength, make it a most worthy bequest for the great Newton to have transmitted to us,—for to him, next after Hooke, and not to Hadley, we are said to be indebted for its invention. By its means a traveller can always, by a little painstaking, in a clear night or day, determine his latitude, as has been already mentioned, to three hundred, or very easily indeed to six hundred yards. An explorer has no legitimate excuse but laziness who does not take frequent latitudes. In the northern hemisphere, he has always the pole-star to rely on, and can find a good latitude by little more than a simple observation of it whenever it is visible; but it is certainly a pale, faint star, and has no representative in the southern hemisphere. It is indeed a matter of trouble to a tired traveller, who is dead beat with fatigue and can hardly keep his eyes from closing, that the bright stars are scattered about the sky in so inconvenient a manner for the purposes of observation. Hours

will elapse at some seasons of the year, in every latitude, before he can make use of any one of them; at other times there are more than he cares to have. He may almost be excused for wishing that he could have the heavens formed to suit his purposes, by making the north star blaze out as bright as Sirius, and placing a corresponding one in the southern hemisphere. What infinite convenience to navigators and explorers would such a phenomenon afford! However, the determination of latitudes is comparatively easy, but that of longitudes is a far more troublesome business, and the difficulty of obtaining them is still a serious evil. Those that depend on lunar distances and altitudes, which are the only methods that can be employed on every night (with the exception of chronometrical methods, which are unfitted to rude travel), are, as near as may be, thirty times less accurate in their results than those of latitude; and not only that, but in practice it takes a vast deal more labour and work in observing them, and at least thirty-fold the trouble in calculating them. A single latitude occupies some ten minutes in arranging instruments and in observing, and two minutes in the whole process of turning over leaves of nautical books and working out, and it tells to six hundred yards; but three sets of five lunars each take a single person an hour or more to observe, two or three hours to work out, and after all can barely be depended upon, without further check, to ten miles. A traveller who has had the good fortune to be advised to take a powerful telescope with him, and a clip to hold it, so made as to screw into a tree or log of wood, has a great advantage. He can select occasions for observing eclipses of Jupiter's satellites, which will tell his place to eight or ten miles, with a minimum of calculation; and frequent opportunities will arise of observing occultations of small stars; these can be worked out at leisure, and will yield the most satisfactory of all results, even to one or two miles: but a really good telescope is required for this kind of work, and a much better and larger one than tourists or sailors are usually provided with. A running survey of a new country is best made by triangulating as much as is practicable, especially with the aid of an azimuth compass, by taking latitudes every night, and by accumulating masses of longitude observations upon a few important points, by the result of which the whole of the rest of the map is, as regards its breadth, adjusted. In this way a newly-mapped country has its position definitely fixed with regard to all the rest of the world, and further discoveries, though they may complete what was hastily done, or give higher accuracy to what was confessedly approximative, can never entirely overturn it.

The advantage gained by star determinations is very great, especially in the earlier stages of geography; the whole that a man can see with his own eyes, of the country he visits, is a narrow belt, usually three or four miles broad, on each side of the route by which he traverses it. If he comes to a river, he can only say that it was of such a breadth and volume where he crossed it, and that it flowed in such and such directions; the rest must all be by hearsay. If, however, the route of another traveller at any future period passes near his own, and if both have been able to ascertain, by astronomical observations and other means, the precise part of the country over which they severally were journeying, it is obvious that the two routes, taken in connexion, will be a mutual check and explanation to one another, and determine, with more or less accuracy, the nature of the intervening strip of land. It is thus that ridges are first traced, lines of watershed drawn out, boundaries of every kind determined, and so forth; but, without positive determinations, all these matters are vague and uncertain.

The difficulty of compiling a true map from hearsay is a consequence of this uncertainty, but no one can thoroughly realise it who has not attempted it. We flatter ourselves on our intelligence, compared to that of nine-tenths of the inhabitants of the earth; but let the reader attempt to draw a map of any part of the world he has travelled over, any fields and cross country roads that he has lived amongst, and of which he can recal to his mind no formal survey or published map. He will soon find how utterly vague and contradictory his ideas are—he will not even know the direction of the north and south line, within some three or four points of the compass. Now, if an educated European's knowledge is of this inaccurate nature, what must that of a savage be, the horizon of whose mind is far too narrow to comprehend a broad area in a single thought? and still more, how great must be the difficulty of patching together a mosaic-work of the distorted fragments which savages may contribute, into anything approaching to the shape under which the entire country exists in reality? Columbus was induced to sail westwards from Spain as a short cut to India owing to the monstrous distortion of the known parts of the globe, which were mapped out by the German geographers from the *Itineraries* of Marco Polo. He had travelled so many miles to the eastward—the circumference of the world was much less than twice that,—therefore he had gone much more than half round the world,—and therefore the shortest way to his farthest point was by starting in the opposite direction to what he did. The corol-

lary to this is, that every traveller who visits imperfectly-known countries, if he hopes to avoid being mischievous, and to afford the world any definite knowledge about what he has seen, should prepare and practise himself in taking astronomical observations, even though they be of the simplest kind.

It has already been remarked that the science of map-making, as regards the production of pictorial maps, is in its infancy; there being very few cases indeed in which the aspect of a country is at all pictured to the eye that studies it by means of its maps. The coloured bird's-eye views of the Crimea and Baltic that now adorn the windows of every stationer's shop, both indicate the want that is felt for this kind of representation, and also the low degree of success with which modern art has bestirred itself to supply that want.

Yet, poorly drawn as these maps are, to how great an advance in the clearness of our conception of the geography of the world should we have attained, if the whole of the countries that have been mapped at all were also portrayed and coloured with as skilful an execution as Stanford's map of the Crimea.

The principle on which these maps may be projected is extremely simple, and for general purposes it is quite easy to estimate distances by measurements on the face of any one of them. Conceive, for instance, a raised and painted model of a country, moulded on a flat surface, according to any one of the recognised rules of projection, with all its features and colourings accurately rendered, or, where advisable, conventionally exaggerated. Placing this on the floor, at a certain distance, that very bird's-eye view is obtained which it is our present object to draw. Now, imagine a sheet of paper to be laid by its side, and on it, seen equally from a bird's-eye view as is the model itself, conceive a painting to be made so that when viewed from the position in question, the map is a *fac simile* of the model. This is one way, and the simplest one, of making a pictorial map; the next is to project this very map, or, it may be, the model itself, upon a piece of paper held between the eye and it. In fact, to draw upon a map that is intended to be viewed by a person standing directly opposite to it the picture that was presented to the eye when it viewed the first map in perspective.

Of course, a single bird's-eye view of a country is unable to display all its features. No picture can do more than give one side of a solid object; it is only by studying pictures from different points of view (which is the exact equivalent to our looking about us as we travel, or our examining a model on every side), that a perfect knowledge of any tract of ground

can be obtained; thus, looking from the English Channel, the precipices and crags of the Dover line of cliffs will be in face, but, looking from the north, the sloping downs that form their backs can alone be seen. It is impossible to be otherwise. There is no commanding royal road or point of sight so eminently placed that the opposite sides of a given object can be seen at one and the same time from it. The difficulty lies in the very nature of things; and if a pictorial sketch is insufficient to show the country exactly as it is at a single glance, it is not a fault special to that particular method, but is shared in by every other means of representation. The only way is to multiply our pictures, and to represent every country from two or three points of sight, then, by comparing the results, a learner may master the features of the ground, but it is impossible for him to do it in any other way. It is much to be wished that these picture-maps and bird's-eye views were multiplied; and that every traveller would make it a point to compile general views of the country he has travelled over, colouring his outlines with scrupulous exactness, according to its most characteristic tints. It has been already remarked, that where the map is on a small scale there must be occasional exaggeration, or else the characteristic features of every country would dwindle down into so small a size as quite to lose their individuality; but this is purely conventional. The dozen or two little trees that a map-maker engraves on his plate to indicate the localities of an extensive woodland, are not supposed by anybody to be in proportion to the actual size of the trees themselves; nor are the tufts of rushes and the short wavy lines that represent so graphically the tracts that lie waste in marshes, presumed to be faithful reductions to the scale of the rest of the map of the identical sedges and ripples of water, of which they are the well-understood symbols. A common sense is sufficient to show what objects are faithful representations according to scale, and what are exaggerations of one hundredfold or more;—no error need be introduced from that cause.

The maps that appear to be most wanted by geographers, in addition and not to the exclusion of those now in use, need not be of a large scale, but they ought to show the characteristic features even of the vegetation, *at least* so far as to distinguish forests of pine, oak, and palms from one another, and to represent the difference of an equatorial jungle and an English bed of sedges. There is room for the display of a vast deal of art in these; and until the attention of geographers, who are themselves artists, have been drawn to the matter, it is really impossible to tell what are

the capabilities of such maps, especially when they are constructed on a small scale; but, judging from the success with which the various kinds of rock and certain other geographical features have already been represented, as in the maps of M. Ziegler, we have reason to expect that future artists may be more widely successful, and by seizing upon the characteristic markings of the earth's face, succeed in pourtraying them with a few graphic etchings and touches, which less skilful originators may be able afterwards to imitate and form into a system.

It is hardly to be expected that travellers should always find it advisable to draw up for publication large pictorial charts of the routes they have travelled, but duplicates of their sketches and surveys would be a very valuable acquisition to the records of Geographical Societies, where they could be studied by map-makers who wished to compile a pictorial chart of the country in which they lay. It would, I should think, be a very interesting task to endeavour to map a district on this method, and the result would be sure to be a gratifying one, if the traveller had the eye and the touch of an artist. The strictly accurate, but meagre information that is afforded to a student by ordinary maps is more tantalising than satisfactory. A blind man fingering a model could learn as much from his sense of touch alone, as they can convey to our eyes. They are little more than an abstraction, or a ghost of the vivid recollections with which the memory of a traveller is stored; not that these recollections are very varied or shifting—one image succeeding another in rapid changes, but that the somewhat stereotyped survey which the mind recals when it attempts to image to itself the features of a once-visited country, is a matter of colour and blaze of sunshine, and dancing waters and quaint crags or well-marked headlands, and here and there stretches of level land clothed with russet forests or lying open in tawny plains. It is surely not too much to expect that at least some allusion to these features—which are everything to the memory, which are precisely what every traveller whom we address is mentally referring to as *his* map, whilst he answers our questions, —should find a legitimate place even in the highest and driest system of topography.

I cannot resist pursuing this matter further, and remarking how much more is bound up in the recollections of a country than books or maps can ever convey to a stranger, inasmuch as the perceptions of other senses besides those of sight enter very powerfully into them:—for instance, that of the smell which is peculiar to every country and pervades the entire

land. Though usually forgotten by the resident who lives and breathes in its atmosphere, it nevertheless forms part of his everyday feelings, and it is by its absence or change, as much as by any other single cause, that a man realises to himself that he has changed his country, and emigrated to a foreign land. In the recently published volumes of M. Huc, on China, allusion is made to this matter with great truthfulness, as all who have travelled widely, and had opportunities of perceiving marked differences, must at once recognise. He and his companion, after long travel on the bleak high lands of Thibet, journey homeward, and when descending into the low plains of China at their foot, the peculiar warm fragrance of the 'Flowery Empire' suddenly strikes them, and brings vividly to their conception the fact of their change of country, and pours upon their minds a whole flood of Chinese recollections and old associations. I have little doubt that every reader will be able to supply many other instances from his own experience, where the sense of smell plays an important part in his perceptions of any particular town or country. Thus that of the seaweed, the fish, and the tar of a village on the coast, the peat-smoke smell of the Highlands, or the gross, coarse, and fetid atmosphere of an English town. France, Switzerland, Germany, and almost every European country, has its pervading smell. In a similar manner we are indebted to the ear for much that gives an individuality to every different land: the incessant and dinning notes of grasshoppers, the harsh grating cry of tropical birds, the hum and accent of a foreign tongue, the plaintive chants with which labouring men pursue their vocations, have all a character of their own, and are alien to the experiences of our mother country. We may easily understand how a blind traveller like Holman, in roaming from land to land, may feel the delight of endless change, as well as the mere pleasure of locomotion; and, on the other hand, how impossible it is to convey the entire notion of a foreign country as acquired by a man in the full enjoyment of his physical senses, to another who receives his only instruction from books, prints, and maps; or in other words, through the medium of his eye alone.

Yet, though we cannot hope to invent any method by which a student at his fire-side may inform himself as justly of a foreign land as if he had actually travelled there, let us, at all events, do what we can, and try to record in our ordinary maps *all* the impressions that the eye takes in; I mean both colour and side views, as well as mere plans.

It is by no means a portfolio of sketches that fulfils the desire I express of seeing the complete picture of a country

presented to the eye; but it must be from a compilation of many views that the artist would be able to combine his graphic picture with a sufficiently faithful ground-plan, and I must repeat my conviction that this is a branch of map-making which has been unduly neglected by our geographical artists, and it is sincerely to be hoped that the partial success which has attended recent efforts will encourage further attempts.

The maps of the Crimea have already been alluded to, and many other bird's-eye views of different towns and countries had preceded them by a few months. The great development of the art of coloured lithography offers great assistance, and may be the foundation of a more natural way of representing the general aspect of a country to the mind of a student than can possibly be accomplished by the most laboriously engraved maps of the present day.

An endeavour has already been made to convey to the mind of the reader who may approach this subject for the first time some idea of the vast amount of work that has to be accomplished before an accurate map of the world can possibly be completed, and we have also alluded to the number of labourers in the field of geographical inquiry, chiefly in distant countries, who collect information as amateurs rather than as professed surveyors. Under these circumstances, it may well be conceived how useful a part is played by Geographical Societies who endeavour to draw to themselves all those scraps of information that otherwise would be scattered over the face of literature, or never be published at all. There is, indeed, no science that requires a system of centralization more than geography, for its materials are gathered from peculiarly distant sources, in a great variety of languages, and from many persons who have neither inclination nor opportunities of publishing. Collections of the original manuscript maps drawn up by explorers, and of which these societies are the natural guardians, are of especial value, for the printed chart which is attached to a traveller's book and received by the world as an authority, is too often an inaccurate rendering of the scratched and blotted manuscript from which it has been compiled. Indeed, with the best intentions, it is hardly possible for a map-maker not to originate or omit some details. Blotted lines or words in faded ink may be liable to more than one interpretation, and bad writing may be misread; so that the advantage of referring to original documents is thoroughly recognised by all map-makers, when they have occasion to work up afresh the geography of a newly surveyed country. But Societies influence geography in many other ways than by merely becoming the depositaries of original documents, or as

libraries for printed charts and geographical literature,—they are peculiarly useful as centres of communication between both travellers and professed geographers.

It is of course impossible that writings, however diffuse, should so exhaust the experience that a diligent observer has gained in years of travel, as to leave nothing new to be gleaned from him by personal inquiry; nay, the science of travel and that of literature are not congenial pursuits: for however successfully the fresh interest of a traveller's earnest tale may buoy up what he writes, it is hardly probable that as soon as he has emerged from savage isolation, he should feel his pen as fluent in descriptive matters as if he had kept it in practice by the everyday employments of common life. There are also numberless objects that become so familiar by use, that their peculiarity ceases to attract the traveller's notice, and he forgets to think and write about them until some chance question happens to lay bare the omission. Or, on the other hand, he may have recollected a great deal that he thinks unworthy of record, until after inquiry has shown how conclusions of real importance may hinge upon them, in a certain though indirect way. For all these reasons a traveller's mission is not altogether fulfilled when he has returned home, published his map, and printed his book; but it is a great advantage to geographers that he should still be within reach of interviews and inquiries. Moreover, few qualified men have started to travel in distant countries—at least if their object in visiting them were such as to attract a reasonable share of general interest—who cannot bear grateful witness to the timely aid and information which these centralizing institutions have been the means of their receiving. And their moral influence is not to be disregarded, by which they sustain the courage and perseverance of a traveller, whose special tastes find little countenance and sympathy from the associates whom the accidents of birth and neighbourhood have made nearest to him. Lastly, when geographical doubts affect the questions of the day, whether they be on matters of war, commerce, colonies, or science, the existence of these Societies affords means of eliciting discussions, and an expression of opinion from all those who, being within reach, are among the best qualified in the whole world to give it.

The French, in 1822, were the first nation who established a Geographical Society, in the wide acceptation of the term; although at least two distinguished associations for special geographical objects had existed in England during a long time previously. Of these, the well-known African Association, under whose auspices many travellers were sent out, dated

from 1788, and the Palestine Association, by which Burckhardt was patronized, from 1804. Moreover, the Raleigh Club flourished—a society of gentlemen interested in geographical matters, who by subscriptions and influence promoted explorations. The two first of these were merged into the Royal Geographical Society at, or shortly after its institution, in 1830, and the Raleigh Club has now ceased to exist as an independent body. In 1833 the Bombay Geographical Society was formed, not only to promote the knowledge of India itself, but also of Persia, Arabia, Thibet, and other countries, with regard to which Bombay was centrally placed, and with which she had more immediate opportunities of communication than were possessed by Europe. Next in order came that of St. Petersburg, which emphatically constituted itself a 'Russian' society,—not in the sense that its investigations were to be confined within the bounds of Russian territory, but limited to matters which conduce to Russian interests. Nevertheless, in despite of the secresy which forms so large an element in the policy of Russia, and of the jealousy with which she circumscribes trade and hinders travel, she has—it is difficult to see with what consistency—been an eager promoter of geography in all its branches. Many routes across the vast tracts of Northern Asia have been explored with care and expense, arcs of the meridian measured, the Polar shores of Asia surveyed; and it was amid the enthusiasm excited by the successful return of Middendorf from an extensive exploration to the frontiers of China and back, through many and most imminent dangers, that this Geographical Society of St. Petersburg was established, in 1845. Berlin and Frankfort; and New York in 1851, complete the series of these Associations, as at present established.

It is quite remarkable, in turning over the published Transactions of the Geographical Society of England, and reading the consecutive addresses made by its presidents on the progress of geography in each year, to observe what vast strides have been made during the last quarter of a century, and how steadily progressive is the accumulation of its materials. We read of the publication of accurate maps of nearly the whole of civilized Europe, (Scotland being almost the only unmapped country in it), of India and large parts of America. Vast masses of additional information of all parts of the world, barely or imperfectly known before, have poured in. Great tracts, utterly unknown at the commencement of that period, have been opened out by the explorer to the colonist and the trader, and an advance has been made, which is too little marked by persons who simply refer to maps of continents on single

47665

sheets. On these, indeed, they see no new great rivers or mountain chains, unless it be in Africa or Australia; errors of sixty or a hundred miles are barely perceptible without direct measurement on such a scale as that. But let the student of history, whether in our own or ancient times, compare the best maps of the country he is interested in with those that were extant thirty years ago, and his instance will be a very exceptional one if he do not find a most sensible difference between them. Thus, let us go to the East: what should we have known of Asia Minor if Sir C. Fellowes, Hamilton, Kippaert, Lapie, and Tchitchatcheff had not been there and written on them? Again, a step further to the Holy Land:—it was only in 1837 that the Dead Sea, lying as it does in the depths of an abyss 1400 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, from which it is little more than forty miles distant, was ever suspected of being depressed at all! Yet, before long, a traveller will be able to take his map of those countries, and explore their beauties by its aid as he wanders along their valleys, with nearly the same degree of confidence that a pedestrian wanders about the passes of the Alps, with no other guide than a pocket *Keller*.

It is not intended to compress within the following pages any kind of summary of the recent progress of geographical discovery; for the number of travellers is so great, and the scenes, dates, and objects of their labours so very various, that it is quite impossible to treat the matter in a truthful manner, except at a very great length. Epitomes of names and places could certainly be drawn up, but these would be quite unattractive to the general reader, and barely intelligible without the accompaniments of maps constructed specially to show the different routes to which they referred. If there were some one definite object, after which large groups of these travellers were steadily striving, it might be a source of great and growing interest to show how each successive expedition fared in gaining its footing in the land; how it struggled a little further than its predecessors, and finally turned back, struck by sickness, paralysed by exhausted resources, yielding to the threats of the natives, or baffled by the desert soil. But there is too little unity of endeavour in the attempts that travellers have made to admit of this kind of treatment, without sacrificing truth to the artistic development of a plot, and handling the matter as a novel writer rather than as a faithful annalist. And speaking from a purely geographical point of view, the interest that attaches itself to recent expeditions is entirely wanting in a retrospect of bygone attempts; for the surmises and hopes with which each traveller had invested the

unexplored country immediately ahead of him have been already explained or fulfilled. Each explorer spends hours in catechising natives and in speculating on what they told him, —in following up faint hints, and combining and comparing statements, with the hope of becoming a trustworthy authority, not only upon the country he has traversed and surveyed, but also over wide tracts of adjacent kingdoms, where circumstances prevented his penetrating. But these arguments and surmises, partly true and partly false, fall flat to the ground, and are utterly superseded by the first traveller who actually visits and explores them. What had before excited high interest, acute and learned speculations, and, it may be, angry controversy, is laid at rest for ever by the simple report of one competent eyewitness. On this fresh authority the practical geographers of the day draw, in hard lines, a new river where before they had indicated its supposed course by a row of dots, —shift a patch of country into different longitudes, add a certain number of new names and dotted lines, and then set to work, speculating and writing papers, as before, on what lies beyond the frontier line of positive knowledge, until another explorer has gone and returned, and pushes the domain of speculation a step further. In a mere epitome of travels, it is the more difficult to invest these bygone matters with renewed interest, as in unexplored countries the maxim of '*omne ignotum pro magnifico*' is especially appropriate, and the exciting prodigies of old native report are found to sink into very sober proportions under the actual measurements and numberings of modern travellers. But a few words may be added upon the more pressing tasks which geographical explorers have yet to accomplish; and though most interesting questions are waiting to be solved in all parts of the globe, yet as Africa and Australia afford by far the greatest fields of unknown country that remain on the face of the earth, it will be sufficient to confine our remarks to these two continents alone.

We may leave aside China, with its one-third of the human race, as impracticable to those who have not, like Messrs. Huc and Gabet, prepared themselves, by tedious pupilage and long residence, for travel in that country. The interest of the Polar regions, and faith in any hyperborean tract of land and water is now exhausted; and we probably are sufficiently acquainted with all of it that is worth knowing. Of the main features of North and South America we are sufficiently well informed, and as to their details, we may wait until the advance of civilization makes it more important to know them still further; but in Africa, as in Australia, all is still uncertain, though the veil is on the point of being withdrawn, and even now, as these

pages are being printed, we have vague reports through Dr. Eckhardt of some vast inland sea, like another Caspian, lying at the foot of snowy mountains under an equatorial sun. It is in these continents of Africa and Australia that a traveller may hope to win the most brilliant results, and it may therefore be well to consider what are the best openings that they appear to afford.

And to Africa we will give the priority, for it is justly her due, since the secrets of her interior have been a riddle over which so many generations of geographers have puzzled. It is indeed remarkable, what vast amount of skilled energy has been shattered against her impracticable sides,—what eminent perseverance has been called forth by the allurements of African travel on the one hand, and the fatal obstacles interposed on the other. It is a land well symbolised by her traditional sphynx,' tempting us with worthless riddles, and repaying failure with death. But now, quite recently, so vast a progress has been made in our explorations, the power of steam, in ascending her rivers when swollen with the rains and running high above their pestilential banks, has been so signally proved, that we may confidently expect to have the main features of her interior placed upon our maps before many years are over, with some approximation to the truth. We now have some right to argue about the boundaries of that basin which feeds the Nile; for the vast mountainous tract, which the snows of Kilimandjaro and of Kenia have proved to exist, can hardly be without some immediate connexion with it on its northern and western sides. We know for certain that Lake Tchad is a Mediterranean sea of sweet water that receives the drainage of a vast basin and has no outlet, and that its small altitude of some three hundred feet above the level of the sea, as ascertained quite recently by Dr. Vogel, renders it out of the question that it should give any tributary to the upper Nile, whose altitude above the sea is of far greater amount.

We have at length some definite knowledge of the Niger river system, owing to the successful ascent of the Tchadda last winter, by which, also, a vast number of routes, including those compiled by Dr. Barth, have become adjusted into place, and fixed with approximative accuracy; for their position depended upon towns on, or adjacent to the upper part of that river. The broad belt of unexplored region south of these parts is sensibly diminishing,—'the candle is being burnt at both its ends.' Dr. Livingstone's most brilliant sweep last year, from the advanced posts of South African discovery, and up to which he had himself been the chief discoverer, cuts

a huge slice from its *terra incognita*. He visits a stream, which was described to him as the main source of the Congo, the largest of African rivers, with respect to the volume of water it pours into the sea; and besides, if his Lecambye be really the Zambesi (which mere inquiry at Quillimane from the negroes there will soon set at rest), we are also informed by him of the sources and upper course of that important river. Where, then, is the present opening to an explorer in Africa? Unhesitatingly, we may answer, let him go to the snowy mountains by Kilimandjaro, determining the water-shed of the land immediately to their interior, and setting at rest for ever the problem of the source of the Nile, which, since the time of Herodotus, has been the puzzle and opprobrium of the geographical world; or else let him start from the mouth of the Zambesi to explore the great fresh-water lake Nyassi, the so-called Maravi, which like another Lake Tchad, appears to receive the drainage of a vast basin and to possess no outlet; or lastly, to leave either Benguela or Loando, and steer to Zanzibar. The conditions essential to success are, either to follow well-frequented caravan routes, or to gain the goodwill of some powerful chief, and to travel in whatever direction his name has authority or recommendation. The bane of travellers in Africa is the numberless tribes into which that country is split up. The normal state of neighbouring tribes is to be at exterminating war, and to have their territories separated by a broad belt of land, uninhabited, except by outlaws or outcasts, and the scene of continual forays. The denser the population the more frequent is the resistance; and as to rivers, which should afford a track open to commerce and intercourse, they are precisely the lines along which it is most difficult for a small and unprotected party to travel.

Again, as, if a tourist in civilized countries had no banker, no cheques, no notes, no gold, nor even silver, but had to lay in his store of money to meet all travelling expenses, in huge bags of pence and halfpence, it is obvious that his means of locomotion must be considerably retarded. And a large party of tourists would fare no better than a smaller one; for, after a certain size, the expense of a party is in pretty exact proportion to its numbers; and if more money bags be carried, the calls upon them for the cost of carriage is proportionably greater. This is exactly the case with a traveller in Africa. His articles of exchange are extremely heavy; his currency is iron, and glass beads, and bales of calico; and his power of transport very limited. The tribute that he has to pay at each successive frontier is probably a large per centage on his entire

property. He is, in fact, mulcted in so many quarters that, unless means exist by which he may procure fresh supplies, he cannot possibly travel for many months. He may start with as much as he can take with him, but the exigencies of a long journey, and of the large party that is required to take charge of a caravan, reduce his stores effectually; and he is lucky if, after six months' journeyings, he finds enough left to ensure full rations until his return to the depôt whence he started.

It is a mistake too often made, that in a country where natives exist, a white man who has his wits about him, is sure to find enough upon which he also may live. But it is not so. A savage is skilled at finding the proper roots, is able to digest worthless rubbish, which a European stomach would reject, or be poisoned by; he is able to subsist one, two, or more days without anything whatsoever to eat, whilst a European, who has not served a hard apprenticeship in bush life, is faint under a hot sun at the loss of his breakfast or his dinner. Added to this, a savage's whole time, from morning to night, is employed, during the scarcer time of the year, in hunting about the country for his food: he lives like the beasts of the field in barren countries, who never cease to hunt for and crop up the scanty blades of grass; and yet grass is far easier to come at than roots edible by man. A savage has no leisure to travel, unless his food be given him. It is the same with cattle; for when grass is scanty, an explorer will find it scarcely possible for him to move on. The daylight hours, during which alone it is safe to let the animals seek for their pasture, are scarcely long enough to supply them with food; and if they be encroached upon by travel, the animals must starve. It is only along a river side, or in a well-watered country, that travellers can creep forward, step by step, an hour or two each day, according to their strength. In desert lands, such as those we are speaking of, if the traveller moves at all he must be prepared to move long stages, and these without food are impracticable.

The weight of the Portuguese rule extends very far from both coasts of central Africa, and the authorities have acted in a most liberal spirit to strangers accredited from other countries, showing every desire to promote geographical inquiries; but whether their traders might not resist the progress of a traveller, when in distant parts, on some petty mercantile grounds, with the same obstinacy and effect as ours have done in more than one instance—witness, for example, in the late Mr. Ruxton's unsuccessful attempt to explore South-west Africa, from Walfisch Bay,—is another matter;

but certainly the traders whom Dr. Livingston met in his recent explorations appear to have been ready to aid rather than to resist. There is surely a great opening to legitimate and civilising commerce in the quarters that have been mentioned above, and a man would deserve well of the opinion of the world if he succeeded in exploring them.

Australia affords another and a most legitimate field for a traveller, and perhaps a more encouraging one than Africa; because whatever discoveries are made in that continent are more sure of being followed up, and of leading to immediate results. The peculiar difficulties that travellers have to contend with there, are almost identical with those experienced in the best-known parts of South Africa. There is, in both countries, the same union of desert and equatorial verdure, the same alternate floods and droughts, the same fear of the country drying up behind the explorer. In both, the means of travel and sustenance are similar,—driving slaughter cattle, using wagons and carts; but whereas the desert, or rather the prairie part of South Africa is now thoroughly understood, and its borders ascertained, for which we are much indebted to Mr. Andersson's recent travels and inquiries, that of Australia is still unexplored; and it is precisely in the difficulty of ascertaining it that the problem of that island-continent appears to lie. Such an excellent map of Australia has recently been published by Mr. Arrowsmith, that it is superfluous to enter into any details of the present state of discovery in its interior, since a mere inspection of the map will tell more than pages of explanation. We know the rim of the continent, and that great slice of its south-eastern corner which is actually colonised; but of the rest, with the exception of Sturt's and Kennedy's famous expeditions right into the centre, we know nothing. There is every reason to guess that the central desert fills up two-thirds of the unknown parts,—the hot dry winds and other climateric effects all combine to indicate this; but what oases there may be within it, or where the northern boundary of the desert may lie, we are entirely ignorant. The natives in Australia can give us no information; they are split up into numberless tribes, that speak different dialects and hold no friendly communication with one another and rarely fraternize with travellers. An Australian explorer passes for hundreds of miles, gathering knowledge of nothing beyond what his eyes can actually see; the natives flee from him, he sees only their tracks and their distant fires, and hears their characteristic cries from time to time about him; but as to what lies on the other side of, it may be, the hills immediately to his right, or beyond the waste of sand which bounds his

view to his left, he can only guess. If, then, a large map of Australia be taken, and on it be painted just that narrow band of country of which alone Captain Sturt and others can speak with any certainty, it becomes plain to us at once how slight is our knowledge of the great interior. Now, in order to discover the limits of any central desert or prairie, when once it is known to be very large, it is of course a more natural plan to skirt it, travelling over fertile tracts, than to try and cut across it; for by doing so the difficulties and risks of the desert may be avoided, while in the latter case they are courted. It is upon this principle that the plans of the North Australian expedition, which has very lately left our shores, have been organized. Everything seems to indicate that the northern face of Australia is fertile: many rivers of a certain magnitude pour down into the Gulf of Carpentaria, and on either side of the promontories that form it; and as water in these latitudes is almost synonymous with fertility, there can be little doubt that the slope or watershed down which these rivers run is no longer desert. The expedition has started to sail up one of these rivers—the Victoria, which was discovered years since by Captain Stokes in the *Beagle*, and was ascended by him for some distance,—then, having examined its source and the character of the country whence it takes its rise, it will endeavour to reach the sea by another route, so as to descend the Albert river into the Gulf of Carpentaria, and rejoin the vessel from which they landed, and which will be stationed near its mouth to bring them away again. The government of South Australia has also equipped an expedition to explore the side of the desert adjacent to its territory, but what will be the success of both these undertakings remains for us to learn. Expeditions in Central Australia involve so great an outlay as to preclude all chance of their being undertaken by the enterprise of a single private person; servants' wages are of course enormous, and a party of less than ten or a dozen men is not advisable; whatever these men eat must be bought from the colonists at Australian prices, and taken on by the caravan. The country affords nothing but firewood and water, for the natives have no cattle, and of course no corn, which they may be induced to exchange for articles of barter. A caravan, therefore, sets out provisioned for a definite time, like a ship at sea, but with a thousandfold greater risk with regard to its freight. If the animals of the caravan perish, the party must perish too, unless that hand of Providence which every traveller in wild countries learns to acknowledge, is pleased to sustain its struggling course towards home

by the aid of occurrences, themselves unusual, being combined in most fortunate and unlooked-for coincidences.

Fever is the special bane of travellers in distant lands,—not necessarily a fever that kills, but one that acclimatises the sufferer, and half ruins his constitution in the process. And the worst of it is, that a similar tempering has to be gone through when the traveller returns to the climate and the way of living that he had left behind him. Indeed, the wear and tear of body and mind is so great, that it is difficult to call to mind half-a-dozen explorers who have attempted as many as three great expeditions. We are as soon satiated with the novelty of exploring as with any other kind of novelty; and, though the charm of bush life is neverfading, yet a man who has travelled much is contented with nearer lands, and does not care to incur afresh the anxieties, the disappointments, and the certain risks of actual explorations. However it may be, rough travel in unknown countries has, at first, an indescribable charm to most minds, and the many moral lessons that it rudely teaches are of undoubted value. Still, in times of peace, when we are, perhaps, overcareful of life, there seems to be a degree of recklessness in commending a career whose risks are certain, and whose success is remote and contingent; but a state of war cancels these feelings; for when the professions of so many of our contemporaries are fraught with equal danger, there seems less harm in advocating that of an explorer, and of wishing 'God-speed' to those who undertake it.

F. G.

THE LIMITATIONS TO SEVERITY IN WAR.

NOW that England and France are engaged in a war of the first magnitude, and one which may still last for many years, the question naturally arises in thoughtful minds—By what principles our statesmen ought to be guided in directing the war, and our generals and admirals in carrying it on? We do not mean the military or naval principles upon which the scheme of the campaigns should be based—these are sure enough to be sifted. What we refer to are the moral principles involved in the conduct of war. We want to understand whether the rules of behaviour towards an enemy are merely chance matters of mutual convenience and precedent, or whether they are traceable to any first truths in morals, and can therefore be built up into a system. We want to understand the grounds for the restrictions upon the severity of war. Why is it that we may slaughter twenty thousand men on the field of battle, or in a siege, but may not bayonet a wounded man, or put a prisoner to death? Why may we ruin our adversary's trade but not ravage his lands? Why may we not shoot his sentinels? Why may we not poison his wells? Why may we lie in ambush in a forest, and massacre a regiment, or spring a mine under its feet, or shoot a general down from some safe hiding-place, and yet not employ an assassin to slay the head and cause of the war? Why may we destroy government property of all kinds, but not that of the private citizen? Is it lawful to inflict punishment on our adversary? Is it fair to exact compensation from him? What are the principles, the primary truths, upon which the usages of war should be based? In other words, How can the conduct of war be best reconciled with the laws of God?

Those who hold, as the Quakers do, that all war is unlawful, would no doubt deny that it can ever be carried on in the fear of God. We go, however, upon the assumption that such a war as the one we are now engaged in, is not only allowable, but a positive duty; and therefore that there is nothing absurd

in seeking to adapt the conduct of it to the spirit of the Christian faith. Unquestionably, war undertaken for the sake either of glory or of gain is one of the most awful crimes that man can commit, and it would be hypocrisy to pretend to conduct it with any reference to principle: but, taking for granted that the belligerent has right on his side, still the question arises—What are the boundaries which he ought to observe?

There are then two views, wide asunder as the poles, of the way in which war may be carried on. Of these, of course, one is right and the other wrong; and, as usual, the wrong one comes to hand most readily, and is the pleasantest to hold, and has therefore prevailed almost exclusively since the world began. Wherever human nature has been unrestrained by Christian principle, the old maxim has borne sway in war, that 'Whatever hurts your adversary does good to yourself,' and the aim of each party has been, simply, to do all possible harm to his enemy. Hatred is so soon fanned into a blaze by hostilities, that it requires no small struggle of the conscience and will to hold it down; and thus, in almost every war that ever took place, the feeling has ruled—That the more the foe can be damaged and vexed, the better.

This view is held, in its most bare and hideous form, by savages, who torture their captives to death. Their only feeling towards their enemies is that which one wild beast might have towards another; and so long as their enemy is miserable they are happy. We look upon such bloodthirstiness with loathing; but yet, in a somewhat mitigated form, civilized nations have been often actuated by the same idea. In fact, in those good old times of earnest faith which are so much glorified by some writers at the present day, there seems to have been scarcely any notion of the restrictions which humanity and religion should place upon war. There is no history which does not abound with such a multitude of examples, that it would be vain indeed to make a selection; but a single illustration, which happens to be at hand, may suffice to remind the reader of the incidents that were of constant occurrence in the days of unproductive superstition:—

The town of Dinant, in Flanders, we are told, was besieged by Philip the Good, and he sent in a summons to it to surrender, to which the citizens replied by hanging the messenger. Upon the duke's approach, however, the courage of the townsmen oozed away, and they surrendered the keys. The duke immediately gave up the town to pillage for three days, then set fire to it, and afterwards deliberately ordered eight hundred of the inhabitants to be bound two-and-two and thrown into the Meuse. Though

suffering from illness, he had himself carried in a litter to the spot, that he might feast his eyes with the delightful spectacle of the massacre of the townsmen and the conflagration of the town.

And so, again, Charles the Bold, whom Comines describes as 'an honourable prince, in as great esteem as any prince in Europe,' having met with very great resistance as he was besieging the town of Nesle, in Picardy, as soon as it was surrendered to him, ordered the inhabitants to be put to the sword, the commanding officer to be hung upon the ramparts, and the whole town to be set on fire. Then, looking on these atrocities with the greatest *sang froid*, he said to his attendants, '*Tel fruit porte l'arbre de la guerre.*'

Though such a height of atrocity as this has rarely been reached in modern times, except in civil broils, yet even in our own day war has but too often been carried on in the same spirit, as if it justified any cruelties, and the one great thing to be done were to inflict the utmost possible quantum of misery upon the foe. But, generally speaking, as the world has grown by degrees more civilized and more Christian, it has passed from the old and barbarous view of war, to a consciousness, however vague, of the sound principle upon which the conduct of it should be based.

This principle, indeed, could hardly escape the attention of any reflecting mind. It is simply this—That violence may be used,—and may only be used,—*for the purpose of lessening the force that enables the enemy to persist in his wrong-doing:* whereas, to hurt an enemy out of ill-will, for the pleasure of hurting him, or to seize what belongs to him for the sake of booty, is murder and robbery.

The soundness of this principle may be easily seen, if the question be asked—On what ground quarter ought to be granted in war? Why is it well and good to slaughter twenty thousand soldiers in fight, but a villanous murder to put to death a single prisoner? We all feel the broad distinction, but it cannot be explained except by the principle before us, which unlocks it at once; for so long as a man is in arms, he is *a component part of that force which you are allowed to reduce,* even by violent means. You may therefore even kill such a man, so long as he is resisting; but the moment he throws down his sword and asks for quarter, he ceases to be a component part of the hostile force, and consequently, if you kill him, you are no longer under the shield of that principle, but you are killing him from sheer hatred; in other words, you are committing murder. And precisely the same reasoning that forbids you to kill a captive, forbids you, also, to sell him into slavery, or otherwise inflict suffering upon him.

It is the same with respect to seizing his property, though the crime is the less, in so far as robbery is not so bad as murder; and hence public opinion has been less clearly expressed on this point than on the other. But still it is felt by all thoughtful men to be unjust to take away what belongs to an enemy, except for the express purpose of lessening his resources, and thus depriving him of the sinews of war. It is a gross breach of this principle to plunder his towns or villages, or to ravage his lands.

There may, indeed, be a certain degree of justification for laying waste an enemy's country, where there are no other means of inducing him to make peace. For instance, in the last war with the Caffres such a course seemed to be unavoidable, but assuredly it is one which never ought to be resorted to, except when all other means have failed; for the amount of suffering it causes to innocent individuals is terrible, and the usual effect has been to exasperate hostility, instead of leading to peace. In the case of the Caffre War, it might be pleaded that there was not the distinction which exists in civilized communities between the soldier and the peaceful citizen, but that all the men were engaged in hostility to us; and therefore, in burning their villages and crops we were not injuring innocent and defenceless individuals, but the very army of the enemy. However, in all cases such devastation is detestable, though it may be excused. But when a general lays waste a country out of spite, or pillages it for the sake of plunder, he is no whit better than a buccaneer.

Unless this principle be kept steadily in view, the mind becomes perfectly bewildered in attempting to pass a judgment upon the war proceedings related in history. One feels horror and indignation, but without quite seeing why, unless one looks to this truth, which at once dispels the difficulty. For instance, Carlyle has succeeded in puzzling his readers by plausible sophistries with regard to Cromwell's massacre of the people of Drogheda—a massacre which the heart of every good man must look upon with abhorrence, but which Carlyle regards with infinite complacency; and, indeed, it is not easy to brush off the cobwebs he spins round the subject, unless we take this principle in hand, and ask how far this paramount law was or was not transgressed in these proceedings.

In our own day, again, a crime of equal magnitude was committed by General Pélissier, in suffocating the Algerians in their caverns; and yet even this infamous piece of cruelty has been defended, on the ground that it was no worse than shelling a fortress. In fact, however, it contained every possible aggravation. It was an indiscriminate slaughter of

women and children. It was the murder of enemies who were making no resistance, but had fled to the caverns for refuge. The death to which they were put was most dreadful, and the choice was not given them of surrender. And this, too, though the Algerians were simply defending their country and their liberties against foreign tyrants.

It is by this principle, again, that the conduct of the Duke of Wellington is justified, and that of almost all other generals is condemned, with respect to the treatment of an invaded country. Everybody knows that when he entered France, he allowed not only no ravage nor plunder, but *not even any requisitions for the support of his army.* He paid for all he took. Now, in his case there was the extra motive that the Allies wished to engage the affections of the French people for the Bourbons against the Emperor. But further, the conquered part of an invaded country ought to be looked upon in the same light as a prisoner of war. It has ceased to be a component part of the enemy's force. It has therefore ceased to share in the liabilities of that force, and ought to be treated according to the ordinary rules of human conduct. To be sure, a whole nation, when subjugated, may fairly be made to pay for the expenses of a war in which it unjustly involved its conqueror; but it is not fair to make the poor inhabitants of one district bear the burden of a war which they probably had no hand in exciting. They are to be treated as individuals, not as a portion of a hostile state.

Our principle has not only a restrictive side, but a permissive aspect too. We said that while it forbids all injury to be done to the foe for the mere sake of giving him pain, it allows injury to be done to him that can tend to lessen his force; and thus it is no injustice to put his soldiers to death in battle, or to reduce them to extremities of hunger and thirst, in order to compel them to surrender, or to destroy the resources which enable him to maintain them.

But this permission must not be taken without a simultaneous reference to a principle which the Christian religion undoubtedly imposes, and which goes the other way. This mitigating principle is obvious enough, and is, in fact, acted upon by most civilized nations, though often set aside; it is this—that whatever is done to lower the enemy's strength, must be done *in the most merciful manner.* If you cannot keep your rights without fighting for them, you may go to war. But if you can get your rights by negotiation, you are a murderer if you draw the sword. And if you can take his men prisoners, you are bound to do so, instead of attacking them: and you must release them on parole, instead of con-

fining them in jails, if that parole is likely to be observed by them. And for the same cause, those weapons are not allowed to be used by a generous belligerent which cause grievous suffering to the wounded. For example, it is against the rules in war to fire glass from cannon. Some remonstrances, too, were made against the use of a copper cup in the Minié rifle-ball, on account of its tendency to cause gangrene. In the *Autobiography of a Working Man*, by Somerville, he describes the preparation, when he was a private, for an expected rencontre with rioters, and amongst other things, their jagging the edges of their swords (which he says is usual), in order to increase the severity of the wounds. Such a proceeding would clearly be condemned by the principle just laid down.*

So, again, in the American War, we find General Howe writing to Washington to complain that in the American lines at Haarlem a number of balls were found fixed to the ends of nails. 'I do not make any comment,' he says, 'upon such unwarrantable and malicious practices, being well assured the contrivance has not come to your knowledge.' Washington promptly replied, 'The ball delivered to me by your aid-de-camp was the first of the kind I ever saw or heard of. You may depend upon it the contrivance is highly abhorred by me, and every measure shall be taken to prevent so wicked and infamous a practice being adopted in this army.'†

There is another mitigating principle, of no less force, but oftener neglected, because in its nature less definite and clear. This principle is, that *there must be some sort of balance between the advantage you will gain and the misery you will inflict.*

It is by this principle that the conduct of Louis XIV. is condemned in laying waste the Palatinate by fire and sword. It might be true what Louvois no doubt urged, that by turning the Palatinate into a desert, he deprived the enemy of a convenient feeding ground. But the heart of every true man swells with indignation at the cold-blooded villany which sacrificed all the peaceful population of that great tract of country for such an end.

It was in direct obedience to this principle that in the last war (if I am rightly informed) we abstained from injuring the

* We should be shocked by the use of poisoned weapons in civilized war. Is this from the just feeling that the poison can only kill where the weapon has already given a wound, and that consequently it is *something* of the same kind as bayonetting a wounded man: though not really so bad, for obvious reasons? Or is it merely that we associate the idea with 'bows and arrows,' and feel a true Dalgettian contempt for such implements?

† Lord Mahon's *History*, chap. liv.

fishermen on the coast of France. No doubt every interference with the mercantile pursuits of a country tends to cripple its resources; but where this result was so remote, and the suffering to those immediately concerned would have been so grievous, our government was perfectly right in resisting the temptation.

It is to be regretted that the same course has not been decidedly acted upon by our fleets in the Baltic during the war. It is well known that the Fins live during their long and dreary winter upon the fish they have caught and salted during the summer months. This is almost the only subsistence of the lower orders among them. Now surely our seizing their fishing vessels, and confiscating all the cargoes of salt which were coming to them for this purpose, was a very clear breach of the important principle which has been referred to—that some sort of balance should be maintained between the advantage to be gained and the misery to be inflicted. We really have not advanced the success of our arms, nor reduced the strength of Russia in the smallest degree by this severity, and we have caused the deepest distress to the hapless Fins. There is abundant excuse for our government in not having made this exception to the rigour of the blockade. But it might be wished, that for the sake of engaging the affections of the Fins, and their neighbours the Swedes, and of mitigating the calamities of the war, and of establishing more firmly than ever the principle before us, we had had the wisdom and self-control to allow the Fins to fish as usual, and had permitted salt to be imported.*

To this principle, again, is the rule owing which is now observed by all civilized armies, not to fire upon the enemy's sentinels. For, in such a case, the diminution of the enemy's force is microscopically small, whereas the suffering to the individual men would be very severe. In this case, too, the sentinel is performing a purely defensive duty; and the very fact of his standing alone gives him a claim to pity.

No doubt this principle, that the advantage must outweigh

---

* The *Times*, last autumn, contained frequent passages like the following:—'List of captured Russian vessels burnt or destroyed by her Majesty's steamship *Miranda*, between the 24th and the 31st of August, 1854:—A lugger, 57 tons, laden with salt fish, burnt; a lugger, 63 tons, laden with salt fish and five casks of oil, burnt; a lugger, 67 tons, laden with salt fish and rye flour, burnt; a lugger, 35 tons, laden with salt fish, burnt;—names unknown, captured the 24th of August. A lugger, 61 tons, laden with salt fish, scuttled;—name unknown, captured the 28th of August. A lugger, 55 tons, laden with rye flour, scuttled;—name unknown, captured the 29th of August.' These were in the White Sea.

the misery, is indefinite, and its application must depend on the discretion of the commander-in-chief. But this is no objection to its truth. There is no moral principle whose application does not depend on the fallible judgment of man. And though in many cases the commander might find it hard to say whether the advantage he might gain would be likely to balance the suffering he would cause, yet in others the question is already settled for him by public opinion. For instance, it is now generally admitted to be an unjustifiable act of a besieging general to refuse a passage to the townspeople who wish to escape through his lines, because the appalling horrors which a refusal is apt to cause, exceed the advantage that would be gained by increasing the number of hungry mouths within the place besieged.

Another principle that might be laid down is this,—That you have no right to inflict death or misery upon B for the sake of influencing the conduct of A. This principle has been shamefully contravened in many instances in modern history; but in none more disgracefully than in the conduct of Henry V., which is thus described in Lord Brougham's *History of England under the House of Lancaster*:—

> The siege of Montereau was a much longer operation. After the town had fallen, Henry became impatient at the garrison holding out, and he resorted to an act of the greatest cruelty, in the hope of making them surrender. He drew up under the walls of the castle eleven or twelve of the garrison, persons of rank, who had been taken prisoners; and he threatened to execute them if the commandant would not yield. Upon the refusal, which he might well expect, he erected a gibbet, and, after allowing the wretched men to take leave of their families in the fortress, he caused them all to be hanged, one after another, in face of the garrison, hoping that the sight so deliberately inflicted upon the commandant would melt the heart of one whom he at the same time accused of the Burgundians' murder.*

It is owing to the consciousness of this principle, that the system of taking hostages has become obsolete in Europe. Since men have become more humanized, it has been felt impossible to slaughter a gentleman in cold blood, because his father or brother left undone that which he ought to have done.

And now the question naturally arises, whether it is not justifiable for a conquering nation which clearly has had right on its side, to inflict *punishment* on its opponent for having unjustly begun the war? To this question, upon the whole,

---

* *Hist. of the House of Lancaster*, p. 206.

we should put a negative. For it is evident, that in every case of the kind, the judge would be the very party aggrieved, and therefore could not be trusted to decide correctly as to whether he had been wronged or not, or to what extent. Very likely his opponent had some measure of justice on his side, to which the conqueror is totally blind. And not only would he have to be the judge in his own cause, but he would have to act as such just when his passions were most heated by the excitement of war. On this ground we should condemn any attempt of the kind; and also because, even if the conqueror could be trusted to judge candidly as to the criminality of his foe and the degree of punishment which he deserved, yet we do not see that such chastisement is necessary. The fact that the wrong-doing nation has been conquered is sufficient penalty, one should think, and warning enough to it and to its neighbours for the time to come. Any additional ill-usage would be more likely to lead to war afterwards, for the sake of vengeance, than to prevent it by awakening fears of a similar punishment again.

But though it is not justifiable for the conqueror to do any damage to the conquered nation, for the sake of chastising him, he clearly has the right to demand that the nation which wrongly provoked the war should make good the loss it has caused; and, of course, his strongholds may be ruined, and his fleets and stores destroyed. That is simply to disarm him, and keep him out of mischief for the time to come.

Here, then, we have several principles, each obvious enough to any thinking mind; and each, in a great degree, admitted amongst civilized nations. They are so closely intertwined, that it is not quite possible to separate them, but they may be re-stated as follows:

I. The main principle is, that a belligerent (so far of course as he had a right to enter into the war at all) has the right, by all means in his power, to lessen the force of his opponent; but except for that purpose he may not touch a hair of his head.

II. Even this permission is so far restricted, that the more merciful method of lessening the opponent's force must invariably be selected.

III. There must be some sort of balance between the advantage to be gained and the misery to be inflicted.

IV. A may not injure B, in order to influence the conduct of C.

V. It is not right to chastise a conquered nation for having provoked the war; though it is fair to make him pay for its cost.

Perhaps two of these principles might be resolved into the same truth; but we leave that point for the reflection of the reader. All of them, however, issue naturally from the command of God—'Love your enemies;' a command which does not seem to imply that man is to sacrifice his rights to every assailant, but that in resisting aggression, he is to control the evil passions of his heart, and treat him with perfect justice and mercy.

The more these principles become rooted in the public mind, the less will war continue to be the ruin of the contending nations. By degrees it would become a scientific game of chess between the two generals, in which there must be a great deal of suffering to the soldiers, and great waste of money, and still worse of mental energy,* to the two states; but still the ravage and rapine which have usually followed in its train would be extinguished. Doubtless, too, the tendency of humanity in war is not merely to make war less cruel, but to open the eyes of the world to the horrible wickedness of it in itself, where it can by any possible means be avoided. It is one vast advantage of submission to any moral principle, that it enlarges the horizon of the conscience; that the more you obey, the more clearly do you see the laws that you ought to obey; and further, can anything ennoble a nation more than its earnestly seeking out, and submitting itself to, the dominion of high moral principles, and sacrificing to them the indulgence of its brute passions?

It is especially important that the true principles by which the conduct of war ought to be controlled, should work freely in the mind of the nation at the present time, because there never was so fine a chance of establishing them for ever as the laws of war. Let England and France but embody them in their conduct, on so huge an occasion, and on so vast a scale, and they will be emphatically preached to all posterity. After a forty years' peace, the world will look upon the behaviour of two such countries as these as the precedent to which the conduct of war in aftertimes may be conformed. If we now show that we comprehend these principles, and will act upon them in spite of every temptation, then they are sure to settle down in the world's conscience as clear moral laws; but laxity in our observance of them now will be an excuse and precedent for still grosser transgression of them in future times.

---

* This absorption of the state's whole attention by the war is one of the greatest evils connected with it. It paralyses all improvement in those things which really contribute to the happiness and comfort of life.

And that the restrictions on war which morality requires are still not so fully understood as they ought to be, has been shown but too plainly, even in the present war. Generally, indeed, there has been an admirable desire evinced, both by the authorities at home and by our admirals and generals, to act humanely and generously; but there have been two or three painful exceptions to this rule.

One of these was the burning of private property, valued at 300,000*l.*, at Uleaborg. The place was in no way fortified. It contained no Russian troops. The property destroyed consisted of timber, deals, and tar, several half-built merchant ships, and several thousand fathoms of firewood. These stores were in no respect 'munitions of war;' they were the materials of peaceful commerce, and belonged, not to the government, but to private individuals, who had laid them up before the war began.

The only plea* we can imagine for this devastation would be, that since it is usual (and quite justifiable) in war to capture all the merchant ships of the enemy, it must be equally justifiable to capture the materials of which they are to be made. But there is this broad difference:—when you begin a war, you are justified in bringing the enemy's trade to a stand-still, so as to lessen the resources of his government. In order to this, you capture any merchant vessel that attempts to break through your blockade; and if the owner of such a ship chooses to run the risk of its capture, he knows what the rule is, and the penalty of breaking it. But an unfinished ship on shore, and the tar and timber of which others are at some future day to be made, have broken no rule, and are not engaged in prosecuting the trade of the country, and are not, therefore, increasing the wealth of the enemy's government; consequently there is no possible reason for drawing any line between such commodities and the stock on a farm, or the furniture in a house.†

(2). Again, the burning of Kola, a town in the White Sea, was no doubt *justifiable*, because a fire of musketry was kept

---

* Except indeed that the admiral did not stop to ascertain whether they really were munitions of war or not,—a plea which he would probably repudiate.

† It seems strange enough that Admiral Plumridge made proclamation (June 1, 1854), that the English Admiral would not injure private individuals nor their property. His intention was only to destroy all defences, fortifications, and *property belonging to the Emperor of Russia*. Yet the very next day he burnt all these half-built merchant ships and other goods!

up from some of the houses. At the same time, as we had fully accomplished our purpose, and totally destroyed the two guns by which the place was defended, it would have been a highly creditable action to have abstained from burning the whole town. When we remember that not a single man of our forces was so much as wounded in the whole transaction, and that, to use Captain Ommaney's own words, 'considerable loss of life had doubtless been inflicted on the enemy,' it would at least have been noble and humane to have been satisfied with this success, and not to have been so irritated by the vain firing of muskets, at a distance of more than five hundred yards, as to destroy the town with red-hot shot and shell. Without blaming those by whom this was ordered, we commend the case to the reflection of the reader, feeling doubt ourselves whether every slight temptation to severity in war should be admitted as an excuse for it.*

But much the most discreditable affair that has occurred during the present war was the plunder and destruction of Kertch, after its surrender without resistance. We much marvel that this flagrant crime has not been discussed, scarcely even alluded to, in the House of Commons. To be sure, it is said not to have been the work of our own soldiers; but Sir George Brown was at the head of the expedition—he was responsible for taking some steps to preserve the lives and property of those whom we had deprived of the protection of their own rulers, and who were, in fact, in our power. But Sir George seems not to have taken the trouble to organise any guard, and the consequence was, the commission of the most infamous atrocities. Private letters affirm that infants were butchered, from the mere love of slaughter, and that, in some cases, the breasts of women were cut off by the scoundrels who were left free to wreak their will upon the unoffending inhabitants.

These three incidents in the war—the destruction of private property at Uleaborg, the burning of Kola, the plunder of Kertch—appear to us to be stains on the generally humane conduct of England. It is earnestly to be hoped that in the remainder of this war we shall in no instance forget how peculiarly we are called upon to set an example to the world

---

* A somewhat parallel case was that of the burning of the town of Norfolk on the Chesapeak, by Lord Dunmore, in the American war, on the ground that the wharves were occupied by riflemen who fired upon his men when seeking to get supplies. Lord Mahon treats this as 'a piece of unjustifiable severity'—'a cruel act of vengeance.'

of self-control and generous humanity, which may tend to soften the horrors of war for all time; and which, undoubtedly, would elevate our country in the eyes of all civilized nations far more than any petty triumphs, such as the burning of the timber at Uleaborg, or the town of Kola. It lies upon us to demonstrate that war itself, with all its horrors, may be carried on in the fear of God and the love even of our enemies.

C. B.

ON THE TRANSMUTATION OF MATTER.

IT seems strange at first sight, that so many men, not merely superstitious monks of the dark ages, but the most eminent of their time for a philosophical spirit and wide range of learning, should have spent a large part of their lives in the vain attempt to transmute the baser metals into gold. The greatness of the prize played for would no doubt enchant many; and the fancied superiority contained in the possession of some secrets of nature, and the practice of a mysterious art, as well as the real influence which a reputation for greater knowledge and supernatural power gave them with the world at large, may have been the chief motives with such quacks as Paracelsus, but could hardly have had much influence with true philosophers like Thomas Aquinas and Roger Bacon. But more than this, there seems something in the notion that such a transmutation is possible which has always commended itself to the minds of men, for after dying out it has been revived again with singular pertinacity. However, to account for the attention paid to it in the middle ages, it will be enough to note that it is a dictum of Aristotle, that there is one substance of which all material things consist, that the elements are produced by the accession of certain qualities or affections to this, and are capable of transmutation one into another in a circle.* The elements spoken of are, of course, the four—earth, air, fire, and water—about which there can be no question now; the former part of the assertion is still open to discussion. Aristotle was not the first to propound that part of his theory; it may be traced back to the earliest Greek philosophers, and has even been supposed to be a relic of a former, more elaborate system, derived from the East. Be that as it may, the Greeks in general despised experiment, and tried to

* *De Gen. et Cor.* ii. 1 and 5.

search out nature only by thinking, so it is no wonder if they left the doctrine on this point much as they found it. Even with Aristotle—albeit the most acute and accurate observer of nature among his countrymen,—perhaps, that ever lived—it was only a pretty conceit, purely speculative, and led to nothing more. With the philosophers of the middle ages, on the other hand, who tried to deduce from it a practical result, if it did not turn out as true as they had hoped, it at least led to the discovery of a multitude of facts, the foundation of the modern science of chemistry; and no one at all acquainted with the wonderful powers of nature thus brought to light will feel surprise at the enthusiasm excited in the pursuit.

The question involved herein seems to have acquired fresh interest of late. Some high authorities have given it as their opinion that recent discoveries render probable the theory of one substantive element of matter, and have expressed their hope that the means of effecting the wished-for transmutation may yet be found out. Such queries as the following are often repeated: whether it is incredible that arsenic may be developed in the human body as a result of morbid action? and whether the gold of California and Australia may not have grown in recent times by the action of electricity upon the quartz, or other minerals which do not yield it by common modes of reduction? To *prove* the negative is of course impossible. In such cases it is especially needful to guard against the subtle fallacy of reasoning upon our ignorance, instead of upon that amount of positive knowledge, how slight soever it be, which we are sure of, lest we fall into that kind of error which led a famous philosopher to imagine he had refuted a rival theory by assuming that the particles of an elastic fluid must be globular because no reason appeared to the contrary. The question is no doubt partly a metaphysical one; nevertheless it is not hopeless of solution; the objects of it are at least within our reach, and we are justified in expecting daily to gain something to our knowledge of them. It may be worth while to inquire how far the facts already ascertained will carry us, how far they help to bridge over the gap which separates this question from the region of physics.

It can hardly be necessary to suppose that the substance of matter, if there should be but one, is such a mere peg to which qualities may be appended as Aristotle held,* with extension, indeed, that is length, breadth, and thickness, but no sensible qualities. Rather it may be allowed, as far as the present question is concerned, to possess all those qualities which are alike

* *De Gen. et Cor.* ii. 1.

in bodies of every kind that are capable of being designated by the common term *matter*, in the sense in which chemists use that word; for to them it is not a simple object of thought, but something subject to gravity, and the balance gives the measure of its quantity. This definition of matter may be thought an assumption, but it is the foundation of chemical science, which might indeed be defined with reference to it; besides, the question is not now of any change of heavy into weightless things, and is so far limited. The notion of one substance on which weight intrinsically depends has, as far as it goes, the merit of simplicity, which may perhaps be deemed characteristic of truth in natural philosophy; at any rate, it is the wont of nature, by variations on a common type, to produce the most numerous and beautiful adaptations.

In order to make the facts about to be spoken of generally intelligible, it is necessary to premise that, by carefully examining and analyzing everything which has come in their way, chemists have made out about sixty-four different kinds of matter, of some one of which, or of two or more of them united in various proportions according to definite laws, all known bodies are formed. Four of the sixty-four are certainly gaseous at ordinary temperatures, one probably so, two liquid, and the rest solid. They are usually called elements, or simple bodies, because they are deemed the simplest parts of matter, or simple in those ultimate parts, be they atoms or not, in which chemical qualities reside. The reason for this is that they cannot, by the most powerful means of analysis at present known, be resolved into any simpler constituents, nor be formed by the union of such: that is, they have not yet been shown to be compound. They are distinguished from one another by some differences observed in their several properties, either in the separate state or in compounds.

Transmutations of these elements might take place either if some of them should be compounded of others, or if their distinctions should not depend on fixed and essential differences in their substance.

That some of them may hereafter prove to be compound is rendered probable by the past history of chemistry, as well as by the properties observed in some of these bodies themselves. For ages water was considered an element, and, indeed, it is hard to assign any reason why it should not have been so considered, until the time when Cavendish and Watt proved it to be formed by the union of the gaseous elements, now called oxygen and hydrogen. Still longer were the caustic alkalies, potash and soda, deemed simple bodies; until the discovery in the galvanic battery of a more powerful agent of decom-

position than any heretofore applied, led to the opposite conclusion, namely, that they are each formed of a metal united with oxygen, and precisely similar in constitution to many oxides previously well known to be compounds. When the varied causes which modify chemical action are taken into account, it appears all the more likely that other discoveries will be made in the same direction. The common effects of heat in promoting chemical action have been long known, as well as those of chemical action in producing heat. A coal must be heated ere it will unite with the oxygen of the air as it does in burning; but the heat developed by that union suffices to maintain the action. Such instances might be brought forward without end, and likewise cases of decomposition, well known from the earliest times; but some results lately observed seem to exhibit the action of heat in a new light, the alternate union and separation of the same two things at different temperatures. At the ordinary temperature of the air, baryta (oxide of barium) and oxygen have no action on each other, but they unite at a low red heat to form binoxide of barium; while at a still higher temperature this is again resolved into the same two constituents. A like action takes place with mercury and oxygen. Oxide of silver, too, is decomposed into metallic silver and oxygen by a high temperature, while at a still higher they reunite; although the compound then formed is not the same as oxide of silver, and is decomposed again as the temperature falls. The effects of electricity, in some respects, exceed those of heat, and their discovery is only of modern date. Those of light, as striking as either of the others, and as important to organic life, have only lately begun to be studied. Photography has brought some facts concerning it to the notice of all; and the action of light on vegetables is familiar enough, though it may not have occurred to every one that the effects are chemical. But they are so. Much of the solid fibre of plants is obtained from the carbonic acid and moisture of the air, absorbed by the leaves, and transformed under the influence of light by a process just the inverse of that which ensues in burning the wood so formed. Many of the other products of healthy plants, such as the green colouring matter of leaves, are not developed in the dark. Even variations of pressure are known to have their effect on chemical action. The most usual cases are those in which they affect the volatilization of some gas; thus limestone, which in an open kiln parts with its carbonic acid at a red heat, may be fused unchanged in a close vessel, where the pressure of a small quantity of the gas at first set free prevents the expansion of the remainder. The state of a

liquid is in general the most favourable for chemical combination, and this depends directly upon the temperature and pressure; the results, however, are not on a uniformly varying scale, and we must be prepared to expect corresponding variations in chemical action;* as heat does not always expand bodies, so it is now discovered that pressure does not always render them solid; ice is found to liquefy partially under increased pressure, and at the same time its temperature to fall; and a like result would probably ensue with all the many bodies which expand in passing from the fluid to the solid state. But it is not only by affecting the fluidity of bodies that pressure promotes or retards chemical action. Phosphorus placed in a jar of pure oxygen at a temperature of 60° F., under the ordinary pressure of the atmosphere, is not affected, but slow combustion sets in as soon as the pressure is partly removed, or the gas diluted with nitrogen. A similar effect is produced with phosphuretted hydrogen gas, which, if it contain none of the spontaneously inflammable compound, may be introduced at the pneumatic trough into a jar, partly filled with air or oxygen, and no combination take place as long as the pressure is that of the atmosphere; but if the jar be raised, so that the pressure of the gas within is diminished, combination follows with explosion. It is just possible, in such a case, since the state of a liquid is the most favourable for chemical union, and since gases by expansion are, with reason, considered to approach more and more towards the condition of inelastic fluids,† that they may likewise thereby acquire more facility of entering into combination. Be that as it may, the fact is a striking one.

Not less remarkable than any of these is the action which some bodies seem to induce by their presence merely; such as that of finely divided platinum and other metals, silica, alumina, and so on, in promoting the union of gases at temperatures much lower than is otherwise necessary. It is this action of finely divided platinum which inflames the jet of hydrogen in Döbereiner's self-igniting lamp; and by a kind of slow combustion will convert, with a sufficient supply of air, any amount of the vapour of ether, or of spirits of wine, into vinegar. Like effects in decomposition are also produced; as when black oxide of manganese, or of copper, or other things

---

* It must be borne in mind that the results of chemical action, that is, the compounds produced, never vary by *insensible degrees*, or pass gradually from one to another, according to circumstances, but are always definite.

† Liquids are very nearly inelastic.

in fine powder, determine the decomposition of chlorate of potash (in one of the common modes of preparing oxygen gas) at a much lower temperature than that at which it can take place without them, though they are not themselves anywise affected by it. Such again is the action of oxide of silver on binoxide of hydrogen; when they are brought in contact, the latter is instantly decomposed into water and oxygen, and heat evolved enough to reduce the oxide of silver, contrary to what one would expect in resolving a compound of oxygen, which usually gives out so much heat on entering into combination, contrary to analogy, too, in a case in which all but the silver assume the gaseous form whereby so much heat must become latent.* Add to these, action of quite another kind, of one liquid on another, while it is itself unaltered; as that of protochloride of chromium, even if but $\frac{1}{10000}$th part be present, in rendering the dry sesquichloride soluble in water; and that of sulphuric acid in converting starch, and even cotton and linen, into sugar, when boiled with them. Nowise more easy to understand is that action by which one body in a state of change seems to induce changes of quite a different kind in some other bodies; such as that of yeast in the fermentation of wine and vinegar, whether its action be due to the putrescent matter, or to the growth of the simple little fungus in it.

These are only some of the agencies, new and old, which affect chemical union. It may be questioned how far they are all purely mechanical; indeed, the distinction between chemical and mechanical forces is not so definite as might be thought. The action of light we have good reason to think mechanical, yet we have no link between the agent and its chemical effect to enable us to say that this is indirectly produced. But this will not affect the point under consideration, that these agencies are found to be the means of producing chemical changes. They may be regarded as conditions of change as much as contact, fluidity, and so on, by their allowing the chemical forces to come into play; those forces belonging to the matter in virtue of which chemical union is possible, and which must not be confounded with anything external. In some cases, heat and the rest produce a direct and immediate effect in overcoming chemical forces; but the greatest number of new compounds and many of the simple bodies have been obtained by playing one chemical force against another, by bringing two bodies together which may mutually react on each other,

* The binoxide of barium, by decomposing which that of hydrogen is prepared, is made by the action of oxygen or baryta maintained at a red heat: perhaps a loss of heat occurs during the combination?

heat and so on being only modifying circumstances. The complexity of all these causes may well seem bewildering, because the nature of their action is not understood; the results are more definite and easily classified.

Considering, then, the varied forms and circumstances in which chemical action has been observed to take place, and that some of them have only been lately discovered; and moreover, that there are many processes and products even of inorganic nature which we have hitherto been unable to imitate, there is some probability that new methods of analysis may yet be found out—or what is more likely, new modes of applying those already known. This leads us to hope that the number of bodies accounted elements may be somewhat lessened. Yet it must be owned that our newer methods have hitherto carried us very little in this direction. In the case of water and the alkalies, cited above, they were found to contain a common element, oxygen, but then it was in combination with a new one in each, so that the number of elements remained the same as before; while greater accuracy, by pointing out differences hitherto overlooked, rather tends to increase the number. Give the argument all the weight it is capable of, it does not render it *probable* in the least degree that the number of elements will be greatly diminished, much less that they may ever be reduced to two, the least number to which decomposition can bring them.

When we come to compare the elements among themselves, some show characters which have led many chemists to infer them to be compounds. Thus, it has often been a subject of speculation whether nitrogen do not contain two elements, since it is so eminently neutral in relation to most other things, in general easily separated from its compounds, and hardly made to enter into combination. In these respects it presents a marked contrast to most of the other elements, almost all of which, not excepting the noble metals, gold and platinum, are eagerly attacked by some or other of the rest; and it is thought to resemble some compounds which by an apparent balance of the affinities of their elements, show no tendency to enter into further combinations. It has also been thought to contain a metal, because the properties of its compound with hydrogen, in ammonia, and the products derived from it, show an exact analogy to those of some metals. No stress can be laid either way on such arguments, for the qualities considered characteristic of elements are not confined to them. It will suffice to mention the compounds of ethyle, exactly similar to those of metals, though it contains only carbon and hydrogen; and cyanogen, consisting of nitrogen

and carbon, exhibiting just the same kind of chemical relations which are most characteristic of the non-metallic elements, oxygen, chlorine, and sulphur. The grounds on which nitrogen is accounted an element are precisely the same as for all the rest, namely, that nothing else can be extracted from it.

Again, Dumas was the first to point out that in certain cases one element exhibits characters entirely intermediate between those of two others, such as we might suppose to belong to a body compounded of these two. For instance, bromine bears this relation to iodine and chlorine. At ordinary temperatures bromine is a liquid of a dark brown colour; chlorine, a yellowish green transparent gas; iodine, solid and nearly opaque. Bromine is also intermediate to the others in smell and in its solubility in water. Moreover, in all cases in which iodine and chlorine unite with another body, bromine likewise forms with it a similar compound; and while bromine reacts on the compounds of iodine, setting free the iodine, and taking its place, chlorine does the same to the corresponding bromides. The proportions, by weight, in which chlorine, bromine, and iodine severally unite with any given quantity of another element are always in the ratio of the numbers 35, 80, and 127,* in which it is to be observed that 80 is very nearly half the sum of the other two. A very similar relation subsists between barium, strontium, and calcium, the metallic bases of the alkaline earths—baryta, strontia, and lime; as also between potassium, sodium, and lithium; and between sulphur, selenium, and tellurium. This relation led Dumas to think it likely that the intermediate substance in these cases may turn out to be really a compound of the other two. As a rule, we cannot, from knowing the properties of the components, infer what those of the compound will be; in most cases they bear no relation to each other, as far as we can see. Who, for example, could predict that the acrid, green-coloured gas, chlorine, so eager to enter into combination, acting so energetically on all organic bodies, with the silver-white metal sodium, so striking for its power of taking the oxygen even from water, should, together, form common salt, so utterly dissimilar from either of them, without smell or colour, crystalline and transparent, with its peculiar taste, indifferent in its chemical relations, and hardly entering into union with anything else? Or who, again, could predict that the union of the two gases, oxygen and hydrogen, the one the supporter of combustion, the other so readily inflammable, should give rise to such a body as water? Yet, in truth, the properties of the components,

* More exactly 35·5, 80, and 126·1.

when looked at closely, are so utterly diverse, that it is hard to say what would be intermediate between them; and as to mechanical differences of form—solid, liquid, gaseous—we are led to think, from numerous instances, that bodies are in general capable of all of them. The harmony of nature seems to be maintained by a balance of forces one against another, by a union of opposite qualities. Hydrogen shows the greatest tendency to unite with oxygen, and with such elements as chlorine, for which oxygen has little attraction, or which are most similar to it in their chemical relations. Sodium, again, is most eager to unite with chlorine, and with those things, such as sulphur, with which chlorine forms at most but unstable compounds. Though we cannot predict the qualities which will result from the union of bodies presenting no analogy to each other, yet, in the case of iodine and chlorine, which are so evidently similar in all their chemical relations, uniting most readily with the same substances, forming severally a series of compounds into which they enter in corresponding proportions, we may not unreasonably suppose that a combination of the two would at least retain all those qualities which are common to both, and in other respects be intermediate to them. Such are the qualities of bromine; and the like may be said of the middle one in each of the triads mentioned above. Now, the fact is, that iodine and chlorine do unite in the proportion of 127 to 35, and form a body with some of the external characters of bromine, a brownish-red, pungent liquid, but the resemblance does not go far; it is resolved by heat into iodine and another body containing a larger proportion of chlorine—the terchloride of iodine. Nor does the union of its elements seem to extend into any compounds with other things. Ammonia decomposes it, and when it is brought into contact with caustic soda, chloride of sodium, iodate of soda, and iodine result.* If, then, bromine be such a compound as is suggested, it must arise from some more intimate union of the elements; and this supposition cannot be regarded as out of the question, for it is no new fact in chemistry that the same elements should unite, under different circumstances, in the same proportions, but in some different manners, so as to give rise to products totally distinct. But even were we to allow what at most is hereby rendered not improbable, that bromine and the others mentioned are thus composite, it would bring us but a very little way. It would, indeed, so far lessen the number of bodies regarded as simple (an end eagerly wished by most chemists,

* $6\,(NaO, HO) + 5\,I\,Cl = 5\,NaCl + NaO, IO_5 + 4\,I, + 6\,HO.$

as it would tend to render the science less complex); it would leave those which remain more widely separated from each other, divided by more marked distinctions—but there an end. It would then be very hard, as before stated, to say whether the characters of one were intermediate between those of others, or at least such as we could suppose to result from a union of them. We should find one element, which, in some of its characters, might be thought intermediate between two others, equally divergent in other respects from both—such as gold from copper and arsenic. The method of reasoning pursued above could not be applied to such instances, and to extend it to more complex cases, including more than two elements, would involve us in a maze of speculation, to the present argument valueless, and from which there would be no clue in facts. We have, then, no right, upon the strength of such reasoning, to expect any such transmutations as alchemists feigned. Besides, extend the reasoning as far as possible, and it must still leave a certain number of elements essentially different from each other, for it starts with assuming the differences of bodies to depend on such.

Now, does observation lead us to this assumption? Does it lead us to suppose that the characters which distinguish one element from another correspond to some essential quality of their matter, as unchangeable, under the common laws of nature, as their gravitation; such as might be if they were really different in substance, or if their characters depended on the form or magnitude of ultimate indivisible particles, supposing the substance the same, as was held by several ancient philosophers; or if they were impressed on, or attached to these particles by the power that made them, and unalterable and inseparable but by the same power? Or is there anything which serves to show that these characters depend on something which may be changed, as upon something weightless added to the substantial particles and concentrated around them, or upon some motion they possess; or that they belong to molecules containing more than one atom aggregated together, as seems to have been Newton's opinion,* the differences being due to different modes of constitution of these molecules, not generally affected by the ordinary modes of analysis, yet capable of being altered by powers within our reach, according to laws of nature now constantly operating?

The facts which have been supposed to give a clue to the solution of this problem, are those relating to that property of some bodies which has been called 'allotropy,' certain changes

* Sir D. Brewster's *Life of Newton*, vol. ii. p. 370.

of which they are capable which have been characterized by a great authority as differing only in degree, but not at all in kind, from the transmutation of the baser metals into gold. Allotropy means an altered state, and is understood of changes in various physical qualities, in the state of solidity of a body under given circumstances, or in its specific gravity, hardness, solubility in liquids, transparency, crystalline form, in its power of conducting heat and electricity, or in its facility of entering into combination with other things, provided there be no change in its weight and relations to other kinds of matter, or, in the last case, without any change in the product of combination. That such changes should be found to take place cannot fail to give us enlarged ideas of the powers of nature; but before we can say whether they afford a solid reason for the conclusion which has been drawn from them, it is necessary to examine some of them in detail.

It is generally allowed that all bodies are capable of the three states of solid, liquid, and gas, according to the conditions of temperature and external pressure to which they are subjected. If this has not been proved in every case, it is so generally true that it is regarded as a property of material things purely mechanical, and therefore common to all, though, as has been before observed, it is not without its influence on chemical action. It has, moreover, been long known that some bodies may, by the action of heat, acquire the property of remaining liquid at temperatures at which, in their ordinary state, they are solid. Thus sulphur, when melted, becomes at first a thin transparent liquid; as the temperature rises it becomes thick and viscid, and when still more heated, liquid again; if in this state it be poured into water, it remains, when cold, transparent and plastic, and is used for taking casts of medals, &c.; after a variable period it regains spontaneously its ordinary solid and nearly opaque condition. In the soft state it is said to be an *allotropic* modification of sulphur; but the change seems very remote from any chemical modification. Phosphorus undergoes a similar change under similar circumstances, and is, besides, capable of another, rather the reverse of this. By being maintained at a temperature considerably above its fusing point, it becomes more solid, passing into what has been called *amorphous*, or, in honour of its discoverer, Schrötter's phosphorus; it is then hard, brittle, opaque, and of a red colour, and only fuses at about 480° F., while pure common phosphorus is of the consistence of wax, transparent, and nearly colourless, and fuses at about 110°. The same change is produced slowly by the action of light. However, by heating the red phosphorus above its fusing point, it is

again converted into ordinary phosphorus. Compare with these the fact that a solution of sugar, when rapidly evaporated till its boiling-point rises to a certain degree, forms, on cooling, a solid crystalline mass; whereas, if the solution be kept hot for some time, even at a temperature much below its boiling point, it gives, when concentrated to the same degree as before, only a syrup permanently liquid. The analogy to the former cases may not be very deep, for the case of a compound is very different from that of a single element; and it seems not unreasonable to account for differences in compounds containing the same elements in the same proportions (isomeric), by assuming the constituents to be grouped together in different ways. We may, however, justly compare with the cases above mentioned the difference between hard metal as it comes from the hammer, or when cooled quickly, and that which has been annealed with slow cooling. Such differences seem merely to depend on the mechanical relation of the parts; and the fact of their being more permanent does not remove them from the same category as common changes from solid to liquid under variations of temperature and pressure, especially as they are produced by the same causes, and it cannot be shown that they give rise to any difference of chemical qualities.

Variation in the crystalline form of bodies is a fact of the same order, inasmuch as it has to do with the aggregation of the parts, more important, however, on account of the connexion of the form with chemical constitution. The permanence of the form in which any given element or compound crystallizes, is a fact sufficiently well ascertained; that is, that it can assume the figures of certain geometrical solids, having definite relations to each other, and no others. In consequence of these relations, the angles of crystals of any given body are invariable; so much so, that the measure of them is the most important character by which the mineralogist can distinguish species, and in many cases is sufficient in order to tell the composition. There are, however, several things which under different circumstances crystallize in two independent forms, or sets of forms, or sometimes even in three, and are said to be *dimorphous* and *trimorphous*, respectively; but they never crystallize at random; the forms of which they are capable are always definite, and form a distinct and well-marked character. A good example of dimorphism is seen in the forms of diamonds and of graphite, or, as it is usually called, black lead, which are identical in chemical constitution, consisting simply of carbon, or charcoal. Another is seen in the different forms of sulphur when allowed to crystallize from the melted state,

and from solution in oil of turpentine; and again, in those of carbonate of lime, as Iceland (or double refracting) spar, and as aragonite. These differences are usually attended with others, as indeed we should be inclined to expect, in the hardness and specific gravity. Iceland spar and aragonite differ in this way; and diamond, the hardest thing known, is likewise a marked contrast to black lead in its specific gravity. No one, however, will be likely to confound such variations with chemical distinctions; indeed, the same crystal sometimes exhibits different degrees of hardness (as measured by resistance to scratching) on different sides; and Iceland spar and aragonite behave in exactly the same way towards all chemical re-agents, and so does sulphur in its different states. Diamonds and graphite show some other points of contrast, such as in lustre and transparency, and even in power of conducting electricity. Though it is impossible to say on what the power of conducting electricity depends, there is no need to connect this difference with one of chemical constitution; for it is found that the same bodies vary in that power under different circumstances. The conducting power of most metals diminishes gradually as their temperature rises, and annealed metals conduct better than in their hard state. Many things which are non-conductors when solid become conductors when fused, such as caustic potash, oxide of lead, common salt, and a great variety of other salts. Air and other gases, at ordinary temperatures and under the ordinary pressure of the atmosphere, are very bad conductors, but acquire the property by being rarefied. These changes, then, which accompany dimorphism, do not imply any change of chemical qualities; it remains to see whether the change of form itself does.

It cannot be denied that some connexion between chemical constitution and crystalline form exists, as above stated, but it is denied that they are so connected that one cannot be changed without the other; and it is asserted that the latter is dependent on other causes, purely mechanical, and variable accordingly. It is true that the same body can only assume or does only assume, certain forms under given circumstances; yet the converse of this does not hold. There are many bodies totally distinct in every other respect which assume the very same crystalline forms, such as aragonite and saltpetre, anatase and apophyllite, and the whole series of bodies which crystallize in the regular system, in cubes, octahedrons, and associated forms. Again, many bodies which are similar in their chemical relations, that is, which show a tendency to combine in the same way with other bodies, do crystallize both alone and in their similar combinations, in forms identical, or nearly so.

Such bodies are called 'isomorphous.' This is the case with alumina and peroxide of iron, with baryta and oxide of lead; and there are even several cases of bodies dimorphous and isomorphous at the same time—as arsenic with phosphorus, oxide of tin with that of titanium. The result of this is that a mixture of such similar bodies, in any proportions, may form one crystal; yet they are not confounded or changed into one another by being thus built in together; they may be separated again in the very same proportions in which they were mixed, in virtue of their forming with some things at least dissimilar compounds; on the existence of which, in every case, the methods of chemical analysis depend. Identity in crystalline form implies no chemical identity; for although carbonate of baryta and carbonate of oxide of lead crystallize in the same forms, and any chance mixture of them will do the same, it must not be supposed that equal weights of oxide of lead and of baryta unite with any given quantity of carbonic acid to form the isomorphous carbonates; the quantities of oxide of lead and of baryta which are equivalent, and can supply the place of each other, are unequal. The same may be said of all other isomorphous bodies; and it is this inequality which is the most fixed character of different bodies, and seems to point at a deeper distinction than any which can arise from the state of aggregation produced by a change of temperature or by mechanical violence. But it is to such causes that the varieties of crystalline form in the same kind of matter appear to be due. It has been already noticed that the forms of sulphur arise from the different temperatures at which crystallization takes place, and the same is true of the different forms of phosphorus. It is also interesting to note, that while at one temperature carbonate of lime assumes the form of aragonite, at both higher and lower temperatures, it takes that of Iceland spar. When precipitated from a boiling hot solution the form is aragonite, whereas from a solution at the ordinary temperature of the air or from fusion, it crystallizes as Iceland spar; and aragonite, by being heated to a red heat, is reduced to the same specific gravity as Iceland spar. In this last case, a state of fusion is not necessary to the change from one to the other; and sulphur crystallized at a high temperature assumes, when cool, a new arrangement spontaneously, the external form remaining the same, while the interior acquires a different texture. Mechanical violence aids such a change, especially a series of concussions or vibrations, and will sometimes produce a crystalline texture in bodies which cool from fusion without showing any trace of it; thus, parts of steam engines sometimes give way from their cohesion in some directions being weakened by

crystallization. In fact, crystallization is very much external to chemical characters. Many instances may be adduced, but it cannot be shown that dimorphism is ever attended with any direct change in the chemical qualities of the body in question. In no case can it be evidently traced that the products resulting from the combinations of a dimorphous body with another show any difference due to different chemical qualities of the body in its different forms. The carbonic acid which results from the combustion either of diamonds or of black lead in oxygen gas, is identical in its properties with that from the burning of common charcoal, and with that which is expelled from limestone in the kiln. Nor can the slightest difference be detected in the compounds of sulphur or phosphorus, be they crystallized in one form or the other. It has indeed been fancied that the three kinds of phosphoric acid have some relation to the crystalline forms of phosphorus; but to say nothing of all three being formed alike from any kind of phosphorus, these are really three distinct acids, containing different proportions of some of their elements; and what is called the anhydrous acid is of one kind only, whichever kind of phosphorus be used to prepare it. It may happen, however, that the compound formed from matter which is dimorphous may be itself dimorphous; but a dimorphism resulting from the different forms of the components cannot be traced through the whole series of compounds, as the combining proportion and other chemical qualities may. We cannot, therefore, assume that a variation in crystalline form is at all of the same kind as a variation of chemical qualities, nor argue that the one is probable because the other is possible.

The phenomena of allotropy are not yet exhausted. Phosphorus, which has already furnished examples of several, will supply several more. To varieties of colour, such as are shown by common and amorphous phosphorus, and by many compound bodies, as the iodide of mercury, which is sometimes yellow and sometimes red, little weight will perhaps be attached as indicative of chemical changes. For glass coloured with metallic oxides often has a very different tint when hot and when cold; the vapour of iodine has a very beautiful violet colour, while in the solid state it is dark brown; besides, the colour of most things is altered by their being reduced to a fine powder.

Solubility in liquids more nearly approaches to a chemical character. In this respect there is a plain distinction between common and amorphous phosphorus; the former is soluble in the cold in many oils, both fixed and volatile, and in bisulphide of carbon, whereas the latter is quite insoluble in any of them, and oil of turpentine, or bisulphide of carbon, is used to separate

any common phosphorus which may have escaped change during the preparation of amorphous phosphorus from it. Yet this difference is quite of another kind from that which distinguishes phosphorus from sulphur and arsenic. Every one knows that the power which liquids have of dissolving solid matter is variable according to circumstances, and especially influenced by heat. Saltpetre and many other salts are soluble in hot water to a much greater extent than in cold. But this is not always the rule: some, such as common salt, are soluble in about equal quantities, whether the water be hot or cold; and some, such as lime and citrate of lime, are more soluble in cold than in hot water. In other cases the amount dissolved at first increases, attains a maximum, and then decreases again, when the temperature is continually raised. This is the case with sulphate of soda; the amount of it soluble in a given quantity of water becomes greater and greater, until the temperature attains 91° F., from which degree it becomes continually less. The rapidity with which any solvent acts is quite another point; that, too, generally increases with the temperature; it also depends very much on the state of aggregation of the body dissolved, one of a porous, disintegrated texture being much more quickly dissolved than a compact one; it depends, too, on the degree of saturation of the solvent, diminishing rapidly as the limit of solubility is approached. Indeed, the cohesion of the parts seems very much to determine this limit; liquids are mostly soluble in unlimited proportions. The solubility of gases particularly, is very variable, according to the pressure to which they are subject, as well as the temperature. Moreover, just as heat becomes latent, as it is termed, when a solid passes by fusion into the liquid state, so the solution of salts generally causes a fall of temperature, small in some cases, but in some, as when saltpetre is dissolved in water, very sensible. The inverse takes place on crystallization. It often happens that a body in a liquid state, either from fusion or solution, may be cooled down some degrees below the point at which it afterwards remains solid without crystallizing, and then, when this does take place (either by the introduction of something solid or by agitation) a rise of temperature forthwith ensues. These facts seem to imply a near connexion between solution and liquefaction by heat. Perhaps the power which many porous bodies—charcoal is a striking instance—have of absorbing large quantities of gases may be allied to that of liquids in producing liquefaction. At any rate, the manner in which the quantity of matter soluble in any given quantity of a liquid varies gradually according to the temperature, quite distinguishes solution from

chemical combination. They may sometimes take place together, especially where water is the solvent, and then a rise of temperature, instead of a fall, may accompany solution. In such cases it is not easy to distinguish the effects of the different forces which bring about the final result. But phosphorus does not seem to form any definite compound with any of its solvents, and from what has been stated above, there is reason to conclude that the different states of cohesion which cause the one kind to be fusible at a lower temperature than the other, may likewise be the cause of the difference in solubility.

There is yet another property of amorphous phosphorus which, at first sight, will perhaps be thought to make a decidedly chemical distinction between the two kinds; this is that it shows far less readiness than the other to enter into combination. When, however, the multiplicity of circumstances which hasten or retard chemical action are taken into account, this character will perhaps have less weight than the last-mentioned. The facts are, that whereas common phosphorus combines with the oxygen of the air at ordinary temperatures, undergoing what is called slow combustion, and takes fire if raised to 140° F., amorphous phosphorus is not sensibly affected at ordinary temperatures, and requires to be heated to 500° F. before it takes fire. Sulphur and common phosphorus combine with explosive violence at a very gentle heat, while even melting the sulphur does not suffice to make amorphous phosphorus unite with it; and in general a higher temperature is needed to cause this to combine with any other bodies than for common phosphorus. But when the union has taken place, it is in the same proportions by weight, and the product has the same properties in either case. Now, if it be considered that the state of aggregation of the parts of a body, its solubility and volatility, often determine whether or no chemical action shall take place, the greater readiness with which common phosphorus will combine with other things will not weigh at all against the exact identity in the combining proportion and in the compound produced by both kinds. It is well known that matter in a state of minute mechanical division is much more readily acted on than when in a more compact state; common porous charcoal burns at temperatures at which graphite and diamond are unaffected; and many finely divided bodies, such as iron reduced from the oxide by hydrogen, will catch fire spontaneously when exposed to the air, whereas in the more compact state, they are but very slowly acted on. This is, in all probability, due to the much greater surface exposed, and that

power of absorbing or concentrating gases which such bodies exhibit, whereby the chemical forces are least interfered with by those of elasticity. That the particular results of chemical action, where more than one are possible, are determined by such forces as those of cohesion and elasticity, is shown in many cases of double decomposition, that is, when two compounds mutually decompose each other by an interchange of elements. If solutions of two salts be mixed, and if one of the two new salts which may be formed by such an interchange be much less soluble than the other, decomposition in this way, and separation of the less soluble compound by precipitation or crystallization, is almost sure to take place, and the like when one is more volatile than the other. Thus, when a mixture is made of solutions of hydrochlorate of lime and carbonate of ammonia, carbonate of lime is precipitated, and hydrochlorate of ammonia remains in solution, whereas, if carbonate of lime and hydrochlorate of ammonia be intimately mixed in the dry state, and warmed, the inverse takes place, owing to the volatile nature of carbonate of ammonia. Again, if steam be passed over iron wire heated to redness in a tube, the iron decomposes a part of the steam, combining with its oxygen, while the hydrogen is set free, and if the supply of steam be kept up, the whole of the iron may be at length oxidized. If, now, instead of steam, a current of dry hydrogen be passed through the tube, it, in turn, decomposes the oxide of iron, steam is generated, and metallic iron left. The explanation of this anomaly is found in the tendency of one gas to diffuse itself into another. When steam is decomposed by iron it is only a small portion of it which suffers decomposition; and so, too, when hydrogen reduces the oxide, only a small quantity of steam is generated compared with the quantity of hydrogen employed, the action being determined by the readiness with which hydrogen diffuses itself in steam and steam in hydrogen, the presence of one scarcely opposes the elasticity of the other. A mixture of steam and hydrogen in certain proportions will not affect either iron or its oxide. We are not concerned at present with the preference of some elements for others in particular, but merely to show that the forces of cohesion and elasticity interfere with those of chemical union, and that a mechanical change in the aggregation of the parts is, therefore, enough to account for the difference in the two kinds of phosphorus as to the facility with which they combine with other things. These instances, and others previously cited, do this, for they show that the two kinds of force are commensurable, and that the result depends on both. At the

same time it is not necessary to suppose that these forces have the same source, or that a change of one affects the other. Gravitation may determine the fall of a drop of rain from a cloud, but the dissipation of it in falling through a drier stratum of the atmosphere takes place in spite of gravity; and though the diffusion of the vapour is impeded by the presence of the air, so that it takes place much less rapidly than it would in a vacuum, yet the final result as to the quantity of vapour which can diffuse itself in a given space at a given temperature is the same whether that space be filled with air or not. Gravity and the expansive power of vapour are commensurable forces, but do not depend on each other—the one may be very much altered without the other being at all affected. In this instance gravity brings about the circumstances in which the expansive power of the vapour may come into play, but does not sensibly affect the result any further. The resistance of the air is plainly due to an external source, yet is commensurable with the expansive force of the vapour, but only affects the rapidity with which the final result takes place. It would be as rash an inference to say that the force of chemical union in the phosphorus is affected by the state of cohesion of its parts, as to say that the expansive power of vapour is diminished by gravity or by the pressure of the atmosphere. The supposition that the difference between the two sorts of phosphorus is of the same kind as that which distinguishes them from the other elements is quite gratuitous.

Other cases of allotropy, in which some elements show a greater or less facility of combination, remain to be mentioned. Matter already in a state of combination, or when it is but just separated, which has been termed the *nascent* state, is often more prone to form new combinations than in its ordinary free state. Nitrogen, which, in the free gaseous state, will scarcely unite with oxygen or chlorine, is easily acted on when already combined with hydrogen in the form of ammonia. Even at ordinary temperatures, if lime or an alkali be present, ammonia undergoes oxidation in the air, the nitrogen forming nitric acid, and the hydrogen water, which is the principle of the artificial methods of making nitre. When ammonia is burnt in air, the same products are formed, more or less completely, without the presence of lime.*

* Though ammonia will not burn alone, it is readily burned when mixed with other inflammable gases. It is often present in coal gas which has not been properly purified, and the results of the combustion are, of course, very oppressive and unwholesome.

Again, when zinc is dissolved in nitric acid diluted with water, a part of the water is resolved into its elements, giving oxygen to the zinc, while the hydrogen just liberated, or nascent, not only decomposes a portion of nitric acid, taking its oxygen to form water again, and liberating its nitrogen, but takes up this nascent nitrogen to form ammonia. If hydrosulphuric acid, which consists of hydrogen and sulphur, be passed in bubbles through a solution of a salt of *per*-oxide of iron, the hydrogen reduces it to the corresponding salt of the *prot*-oxide, and the sulphur is deposited; but this effect is not produced by pure hydrogen. Moreover, the nascent hydrogen and oxygen set free when water is decomposed by a galvanic current, have similar energies in reducing and forming oxides of metals at temperatures at which they have no such effect when once collected into bubbles. Somewhat analogous is the peculiar condition to which it is found, by Schönbein's investigations, that oxygen is brought when electric sparks are passed through it. In this state it is called ozone, from its peculiar smell, and it shows a much more energetic action, directly replacing iodine in its combinations with the metals of the alkalies, and even oxidizing silver—effects not produced by common oxygen. The same change is induced by other means than the electric spark, as by the slow combustion of phosphorus or of ether. The results of its action are in all cases simply oxidations, such as may be produced in other ways, and by heating it may be brought back to ordinary oxygen. To take an instance of an opposite kind, due to the same chemist—if a piece of iron wire (fifty or sixty feet long was tried by Schönbein) be heated at one end so that a change of colour is produced by the formation of a film of oxide, and be then dipped, the heated end first, into nitric acid diluted with about its own bulk of water, no action ensues on any part of the wire; yet acid of that strength acts violently upon ordinary wire. If, however, the temperature be raised to 160° F., the acid acts on the wire just as upon ordinary wire, and so does very dilute acid, without the application of heat. A similar change may be effected in the iron by connecting it with the positive pole of a galvanic battery, and it may then be used as a conductor from that pole to decompose nitric acid of any strength, or other acid solutions, without being affected even by the nascent oxygen developed at its surface, which then escapes in bubbles, as it would from a wire of platinum. Such instances may be difficult to explain, but there is no pretext in this or any other cases that might be adduced for supposing any chemical change in the iron; it has not even lost any of its external characters, and regains its ordinary

state when left to itself for a short time.* The change which it has undergone is one which seems only to affect the circumstances of temperature which are requisite to promote its action on the acid, and not anywise the result when such action does take place; and it is the result in all the other cases mentioned which forms the essential distinction in kind between such modifications and chemical changes.

In the midst of all this complexity of circumstances, the Daltonian law stands out unshaken. This law states, that if two bodies unite with any given quantity of a third, taken as a unit, in certain proportions by weight, they will unite with each other in the same proportions, or in some simple multiples of them; moreover, that this proportion for a compound is expressed by the sum of the numbers expressing the proportions for its constituents. There is not the slightest ground for believing that any circumstances of temperature or electricity modify this law. For any powers that we can control, it seems as unchangeable as gravitation itself, and by means of it an element may be traced through all its compounds when other characters are lost sight of. It is therefore no unreasonable conclusion, that there is something in the nature of matter, a power of which this law is the expression, which is likewise independent of circumstances. The ground, then, upon which we can determine the chemical identity of two bodies, is either the transmutation of one into the other, without adding or separating anything, or exact coincidence in the compounds they form with other things. So that if two bodies, even though we are not able to transmute them, unite with others in the same proportions to form compounds alike in all their properties, and this in every case observed, it is a fair induction to suppose them identical in chemical constitution; but not in any other case. Allotropic changes are much more nearly of a kind with changes of solids to fluids, than of chemical qualities, and are certainly due in many cases to the same causes. The case in which they approach most closely to chemical changes, is when they affect solubility in liquids. But the phenomena of solution, and of absorption of gases, have not yet been reduced to any general law; the point, however, which distinguishes them from chemical union, has been already

* The explanation given of this, that the iron is covered with a film of oxide would, if admitted, at once remove all question as to a change in the chemical qualities of the iron. It must be owned, however, that it is not easy to see how it is, if this explanation be true, that the iron so soon recovers its ordinary state by being removed from the acid, or how it is that the dilute acid does not dissolve the oxide.

mentioned. It must be shown that the power which holds bodies in chemical union is dependent on the same causes as those qualities which are alterable, or that it is a result of heat or other circumstances, before it can be assumed that allotropic changes differ only in degree, and not in kind, from chemical changes.

It is no wonder that when Davy first announced his discovery of the compound nature of the alkalies, chemists should think it not improbable that the transmutation of metals would be found out next. It was such an uprooting of old prejudices, such a manifestation of their ignorance, that it made them doubt the grounds of their belief on other points until they had examined whether there were any real connexion between the cases. And it will, perhaps, still occur to some, that these allotropic changes are as marvellous and as unexpected as any change of chemical qualities could be, and that, as those do take place, it is not improbable that these may also, under favourable circumstances. Now, with regard to this, it is to be observed that the recent discovery of these properties of matter may well make us careful how we assert that anything is impossible, but it does not follow, because a thing is not impossible, that it must therefore be probable; and if ignorance be no sufficient ground for a negative hypothesis, much less is it for a positive one. We cannot argue, *à priori*, what the laws of nature *may be*, but are concerned to find out what they *are*, which can only be done by observation; and it is idle to reason by analogy until it be shown that an analogy subsists.

To analyse the various hypotheses which have been propounded upon the constitution of material things, and show which of them affords the most satisfactory, or, rather, the least objectionable explanation of the facts, would be quite beyond the scope of the present essay. It may, however, be worth while to mention one by way of illustration of what has been said; it is no new one, for it has the sanction of Newton's authority to a certain extent, and has lately found a supporter in Laurent. While Dalton's law points plainly to something in the nature of the elements indivisible by chemical forces, or any others we have hitherto brought to bear on them, that is, to atoms in one sense, (though it is not meant thereby anything absolutely solid, impenetrable, and incapable of changing its form,) it does not follow that the parts on which external qualities depend—form, crystalline structure, hardness, specific gravity, translucency, conducting power—should be single atoms. These qualities, as well as those of assuming the states of solid, liquid, and gas, are common to simple

bodies and to compounds. Whatever, then, may be the ultimate constitution, we may not unreasonably suppose these qualities to depend upon aggregates of two or more of the ultimate particles, as well in simple bodies as in compounds. This will afford an explanation of the changes which bodies undergo without their inner chemical constitution suffering any alteration. Thus Laurent supposes that hydrogen, in its ordinary gaseous state, consists of molecules, each containing pairs of indivisible particles, united by their mutual attraction; not so united but that a sufficient chemical force may overcome the union, but still so as to neutralize, to a certain extent, their action on other kinds of matter. To use an illustration which has but a superficial analogy — as two magnets placed with their opposite poles together neutralize each other so that they show little attraction for other things, but exhibit their power as soon as separated, so with the atoms of hydrogen. When it is just separated from its compounds, or is in the nascent state, when the particles which had been united with those of something else, are set free, before they have arranged themselves in pairs, they exert a greater force on other things, and more easily enter into union with them. The forces of cohesion, crystallization, and so on, which affect both compound and simple bodies, are supposed to be exerted on each of these molecules as a whole. It is needless to speculate further on this hypothesis.

It may, perhaps, still be urged that there are powers of nature which we cannot imitate, both in the mineral and organic world. This is true, if it be meant that there are many natural products which art cannot reproduce, for many minerals and all organic bodies are yet inimitable. But all the chemist can do is so to adjust the circumstances that the natural powers of matter may bring out the result aimed at; and there may well be conditions in nature which he cannot imitate—the great heat and enormous pressure in the interior of the earth, and the slow action of galvanic currents, feeble it may be, but exerted during ages to which our tiny term bears no comparison. More complicated circumstances may well give rise to more complex compounds; there may be inequalities which we may be unable now to explain, but which, like those in the motions of the heavenly bodies, are only the results, upon a grander scale, of those very laws which have been established in simpler cases. There is, at least, nothing to show that minerals are produced by any transmutation of matter; and even in organic nature we have no reason to think that changes occur under any other laws than those which rule the changes in inorganic bodies. There

are of course higher, less universal laws, in obedience to which matter takes that shape which may fit it to serve as the organ of a living being, and a formative power which may be contrasted with that of crystallization in the mineral kingdom, whereby different kinds of matter are built in together into the structure; but organization is not chemical combination. There are, moreover, chemical products resulting from the action of these organs such as art has not been able to produce, but the living beings can only be regarded as instruments in producing them, subject to the very same laws as regulate the processes of the laboratory. There is not the least ground for supposing that they can make any interchange of matter; on the contrary, they can only organize matter when it is presented to them already in particular states of combination, their operations are in fact more limited. Plants require nitrogen to be presented to them in the form of ammonia, and cannot take it up from the free state in which it exists in the atmosphere. In animal life, wonderful as is the power by which each requisite is selected and placed where it is needed, certain transformations only of more complex to simpler compounds can take place, and the products of decomposition are always given back to the earth in the same states. Animals cannot live without food already completely organized, they cannot form their parts from the simpler combinations of elements from which plants draw their nourishment; far less can they produce changes in the chemical constitution of matter. The occurrence of some things in animals which is at first sight puzzling, is fully accounted for on closer investigation. Thus, the presence of the phosphoric acid which enters so largely into the bones, and otherwise plays so important a part in the economy of the higher animals, is readily explained, now that it is known to be equally necessary to many vegetables, at least, that in corn and the grasses, as well as other plants, it is found to be uniformly present in considerable proportions. And with regard to some other things, such as fluorine, found constantly in animals, and thought difficult to account for, the quantity in which they occur is so exceedingly minute that they may easily be overlooked in the large quantity of food taken into the system. The supposition that arsenic can be formed in the human body from things which do not yield it to analysis is simply groundless.

One thing will be manifest to all who have taken the trouble to read thus far, namely, that our ignorance of the exact nature of the action of heat in particular leaves us in a state of great perplexity as to all chemical processes, and the exact influence which any one of the forces which

come into play have upon the final result. At present it would be quite useless to speculate upon the effects of the ether which is presumed to be the medium whereby light and heat are diffused. It is much to be hoped that the further development of the theory of heat may at least help to distinguish the part which is immediately due to it, so as to allow of some classification of the effects of chemical forces, and leave the way a little more clear to a rational theory of chemical action. It can hardly be anything more than this perplexity which gives scope for entertaining the question of transmutation at all.

In conclusion, it must be owned that as to the existence of but one substance of material things, the much noised discoveries of modern times leave us very much where we were. There may be some reasons for expecting a slight diminution in the number of elements; but the facts do not at all warrant the conclusions which some chemists have drawn from them as to the transmutation of metals, they afford no rational ground for thinking it possible. The differences between the metals seem so deeply seated that there cannot be said to be any probability that they are alterable in the ordinary course of nature; and if the chemist hope to find a golden end to his labour at the fire, he must rather look for it in the modern alchemy by conversion. The reward of services rendered to the arts will be that due to a benefit done to his fellowmen, which is perhaps more than the alchemists of old were conscious of. Nor need the chemist, who loves natural science for its own sake, who finds in the operation of physical laws directed to the grandest ends, while they descend to the most minute particulars, that perfection which is sought in vain in any human works or plans, despise this application of science; for it has already led, and is likely to lead, in the hands of those who have a love for truth, to greater advancement than any purely speculative philosophy, or the search after the philosopher's stone, has ever done. G. D. L.

THE RELATION OF NOVELS TO LIFE.

WE have discarded many of the amusements of our forefathers. Out-of-door games are almost inaccessible to the inhabitants of cities; and if they were not, people are too much tired, both in nerve and muscle, to care for them. Theatres and spectacles are less frequented than they used to be; whilst the habit of reading has become universal. These causes increase the popularity and the influence of novels, and, measured by these standards, their importance must be considered very great.

The majority of those who read for amusement, read novels. The number of young people who take from them nearly all their notions of life is very considerable. They are widely used for the diffusion of opinions. In one shape or another, they enter into the education of us all. They constitute very nearly the whole of the book-education of the unenergetic and listless.

Familiar as the word 'novel' may be, it is almost the last word in the language to suggest any formal definition; but it is impossible to estimate the influence of this species of literature, or to understand how its character is determined, unless we have some clear notion as to what is, and what is not, included in the word.

The first requisite of a novel is, that it should be a biography,—an account of the life, or part of the life, of a person. When this principle is neglected or violated, the novel becomes tiresome; after a certain point it ceases to be a novel at all, and becomes a mere string of descriptions.

The *Arabian Nights*, perhaps, contain as slight a biographical substratum as is consistent with anything like romance. The extravagance of the incidents and scenery is their principal charm, and the different characters might be interchanged amongst the different stories, almost without notice. Who would relish the *Diamond Valley* and the *Roc's*

Egg the less, if they were introduced in the *History of the three Calendars*, or in the *Adventures of Prince Caramalzaman?* and who would notice the change if either of those personages were to be substituted for *Sinbad the Sailor?* Who, on the other hand, could interchange the incidents, or the personages, of the *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, and *Robinson Crusoe?*

Perhaps the essentially biographical character of novels will be more fully displayed by comparing less extreme cases. In what does the superiority of Fielding over Mr. Dickens consist? Is it not in the fact that *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews* are *bonâ fide* histories of those persons; whilst *Nicholas Nickleby* and *Oliver Twist* are a series of sketches, of all sorts of things and people, united by various grotesque incidents, and interspersed with projects for setting the world to rights?

There is a class of books which wants only a biographical substratum to become novels. In so far as it is an account of Sir Roger de Coverley, and the Club, the *Spectator* is one of the best novels in the language; and if the original conception had been more fully carried out, that fact would have been universally recognised. It employs fictitious personages to describe manners and characters, and it sustains the interest which they excite by fictitious incidents. Yet no one would call those parts of the *Spectator* which are not biographical a novel.

Novels must also be expressly and intentionally fictitious. No amount of carelessness or dishonesty would convert into a novel what was meant for a real history. It would, for example, be an unjustifiable stretch of charity to consider the *Histoire des Girondins*, or the *Histoire de la Restauration*, as romances. On the other hand, a very small amount of intentional fiction, artistically introduced, will make a history into a novel. All the events related may be substantially true, and the fictitious characters may play a very subordinate part, and yet the result may be a novel, in the fullest sense of the word. In the *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, Gustavus Adolphus, Charles, and Fairfax occupy the most prominent places. The scenes in which they take part are generally represented with great historical fidelity. The cavalier himself, and his adventures, are only introduced as a medium for the display of the events through which he passes; but they are introduced so naturally as incidents in his life, and the gaps between them are filled with such probable and appropriate domestic occurrences, that the result is the most perfect of all historical novels.

We understand, then, by the word *novel*, a fictitious bio-

graphy. Books written primarily for purposes of instruction, or for the sake of illustrating a theory, do not fall within this definition, because they are not, properly speaking, biographies. If we suppose the hero to have been a real person, and then consider whether the object of the book was to deduce some moral, or to illustrate some theory, by his life, or to describe the man as he was, we shall be able to say whether the book is, or is not, a novel.

Thus, we should not call Plato's *Dialogues* novels, though they resemble them more nearly than any other ancient books.* Nor should we call the 'Vision,' in Tucker's *Light of Nature*, a novel, although it would fall expressly within the terms of our definitions, if it were not written merely to illustrate a theory. The miraculous separation of Search's body from his vehicle—the inconvenience which he sustained from the rays of light—his conversation with Locke—his interview with his wife—his absorption into the mundane soul—and his re-introduction into his body, form an imaginary posthumous biography, with a beginning, middle, and end; but it cannot be called a novel, inasmuch as Search and his adventures are introduced solely in order to give life to a philosophical speculation, which is never for an instant lost sight of.

Pilgrim's Progress and the *Holy War* come nearer to the character of novels. The artistic bias of Bunyan's mind was so strong, that we should be inclined to think that he sacrificed the allegory to the story more frequently than the story to the allegory. The death of Faithful, for example, is an incident which, if the book is a novel, is as well conceived as executed; but it is inconsistent with the allegory, which would have required that Faithful should go to Heaven in the sense of travelling along the actual highroad till he got there. So, too, the Siege of Mansoul is much more like the Siege of Leicester than the temptations of the Devil.

There is another class of books which would be excluded from our definition by the word 'fictitious.' As fiction is sometimes used as a mere vehicle for opinions, so it is sometimes a mere embellishment of facts. There is a class of books in which the life of a real person is made to illustrate some particular time or country, and in which just so many fictitious circumstances are introduced as may be necessary to give a certain unity to the scenes described. The most perfect instance of this form of writing with which we are acquainted is M. Bungener's *Trois Sermons sous Louis XV.*, which is partly

* Apuleius' *Ass* is, no doubt, strictly a novel, and Lucian's *Dialogues* have much of the same character.

a history of French Protestants in the eighteenth century, partly a fictitious biography of the real man Rabaut. It has the inconvenience of constantly suggesting to the reader the impression that the author considers him incapable of taking an interest in the subject unless it is baited with a certain amount of fiction.

It is commonly said that novels supply the place of comedies; and it would perhaps be hard to put into words the distinction between them, otherwise than by the definition which we have suggested. A drama is the representation of an incident—a novel is the history of a life. Thus, the plays which composed an Æschylean trilogy consisted of the representation of separate incidents in the life of some person or the fortunes of some royal house; but if they had been permitted to run into each other, such an interference would have been a violation of the rules of dramatic art, and would have made them into a novel.

It is not always easy to say what is incident and what is biography. Shakspeare's historical plays do not fall very appropriately under either division. Some, for example, of Crabbe's tales, are miniature novels, others undramatized plays. It cannot, however, be doubted that in cases upon which no one hesitates our distinction holds good. Thus, *Waverley* is undeniably a novel, and *Romeo and Juliet* is undeniably a play. We should have been displeased if Shakspeare had introduced into his play anything not bearing upon the single subject of the love of the principal persons in it. It is, on the other hand, one of the beauties of *Waverley* that it incidentally illustrates a great number of subjects in which the hero of the novel had not personally much interest.

Novels, in the proper sense of the word, are used for a greater number of purposes than any other species of literature. Their influences on their readers may, however, be reduced within a very narrow compass. In early boyhood and in mature life they are read merely for amusement; and indulgence in them will be beneficial, or otherwise, according to the ordinary rules upon that subject. But at that time of life which intervenes between these two periods they exercise a far greater influence. They are then read as commentaries upon the life which is just opening before the reader, and as food for passions which are lately awakened but have not yet settled down to definite objects.

It may be questioned how far the habit of reading novels contributes to knowledge of the world. The undue prominence given to particular passions—such as love, the colouring used for artistic purposes, and a variety of other circumstances,

are so much calculated to convey false impressions, that it may be plausibly doubted whether the impressions formed are, in fact, better than none at all.

Such a judgment appears to us too severe. If a young man were, according to Mr. Carlyle's suggestion, to be shut up in a glass case from eighteen to twenty-five, and were, during that period, to be supplied with an unlimited number of novels, he would no doubt issue from his confinement with extremely false notions of the world to which he was returning; but if, during such an imprisonment, he had made it a point of conscience never to open a novel, he would, in the absence of extraordinary powers of observation and generalization, be strangely puzzled on re-entering life.

What we call knowledge of the world is acquired by the same means as other kinds of knowledge, and consists not in mere acquaintance with maxims about life, but in applying appropriate ideas to clear facts. This application can only be made by a proper arrangement and selection of the material parts of the facts observed; and this arrangement is effected, to a very great degree, by guesses and hypotheses. No one will be able to make any use of his experience of life, or to classify it in such a manner as to add to his real knowledge, unless he is provided in the first instance with some schemes or principles of classification, which he starts with, and which he enlarges, narrows, or otherwise modifies as he sees cause.

Discoveries, it has been said,* are not improperly described as happy *guesses*, and guesses, in these, as in other instances, imply various suppositions made, of which some one turns out to be the right one. We may, in such cases, conceive the discoverer as inventing and trying many conjectures, till he finds one which answers the purpose of combining the scattered facts into a single rule. The discovery of general truths from special facts is performed, commonly at least, and more commonly than at first appears, by the use of a series of suppositions, or *hypotheses*, which are looked at in quick succession, and of which the one which really leads to truth is rapidly detected, and when caught sight of, firmly held, verified, and followed to its consequences.

Nor does the indistinctness and incompleteness of their suggestions render them useless. The same author observes,—

A maxim which it may be useful to recollect is this, that hypotheses may often be of service to science, when they involve a certain portion of incompleteness and even of errour. The object of such inventions is to bind together facts which, without them,

* Whewell, *Philo. Ind. Sci.*, vol. ii., p. 41. The quotation is slightly modified.

are loose and detached; and if they do this, they may lead the way to a perception of the true rule by which the phenomena are associated together, even if they themselves misstate the matter. The imagined arrangement enables us to contemplate as a whole a collection of special cases, which perplex and overload our minds when they are considered in succession; and if our scheme has so much of truth in it as to conjoin what is really connected, we may afterwards duly connect, or limit the mechanism of this connexion.*

φθονερὸν ὁ δαίμων—φίλοι οὐ φίλος. 'Friends follow fortune,' and a thousand other proverbs, are instances of these hypothetical 'guesses at truth,' which are not intended to be exhaustive, but merely to set in a strong light one lesson gathered from human affairs. Novels, perhaps, offer a greater number of such hypotheses than are to be derived from any other source; and though they give them in a very confused, indefinite manner, they gain in liveliness and variety what they want in precision.

It is, however, by the materials which it affords for self-examination that novel reading enlarges our experience most efficiently. It was, if we are not mistaken, Lord Chesterfield's advice to his son, that if he wished to understand mankind he ought to be always saying to himself, 'If I were to act towards that man as he acts towards me, he would feel towards me as I feel towards him.' The thought that they often do act like characters represented in novels, and that people do in consequence feel towards them as they themselves regard such characters, must occur, we should think pretty frequently, to novel readers. It would be a great effort of self-denial to many of us to read *Murad the Unlucky*, or *To-morrow;* and we should think that few men could become acquainted with *George Osborne* or *Arthur Pendennis* without acquiring a consciousness of a multitude of small vanities and hypocrisies which would otherwise have escaped their attention. To produce or to stimulate self-consciousness by such means, may not be altogether a healthy process, but it is unquestionably one which has powerful effects.

In a large class of readers, novels operate most strongly by producing emotion. Strange as it seems, many people sympathize more intensely with fictitious than with historical characters. Persons who would read Carlyle's *History of the French Revolution* unmoved, would not be proof against such books as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, or the *Heir of Redclyffe;* and we

* *Ib.*, p. 60. This is followed by a characteristically beautiful illustration taken from the utility of the false maxim as to nature's *fuga vacui*, in the progress of science.

suspect that Mr. Dickens has caused a great deal more emotion by some of his luscious death-bed scenes, than by what we have always considered one of the most fearful stories, both in matter and manner, which we ever read, the papers entitled *Transported for Life*,* in *Household Words*. Habitual emotion, whatever may be the exciting cause, produces some moral effects. A man who had really seen a negro flogged to death, or had attended a young man on his wedding tour, in a fatal illness, would probably be in some respects altered for a longer or shorter time afterwards. Whatever would be the effect of habitually witnessing such scenes, the same effect would follow in a much slighter degree from habitually reading descriptions of them; but in order to make the parallel complete we must suppose the witnessing of the scenes to be as much a matter of choice as the reading of the novels; a person who went to see a man die because he liked it would receive very different impressions from one who saw such a sight because he could not help it.

It is sometimes broadly stated that emotion produced by fiction is an evil, and tends to harden the heart. This statement goes further than its authors suppose. The parables are fictions, but we do not think any one was ever hurt by emotion produced by reading the parable of the Prodigal Son, or that of Dives and Lazarus. Emotion, also, is of many kinds. Laughter implies emotion. Is it wrong to laugh at Falstaff or Mrs. Quickly? Admiration is an emotion. Even amusement, in so far as it involves interest, and is not a mere suspension of thought, implies emotion. So, too, wonder is an emotion. No one thinks it wrong to produce these emotions by fiction. In fact, the emotions of tenderness or terror are the only ones which are objected to; and since the objection will not lie against producing emotion by fiction, but only against producing those particular emotions, it must be contended that the emotions are bad in themselves, and ought only to be submitted to when unavoidably forced upon the mind. Few people would maintain this proposition when nakedly set before them.

It may, however, be remarked, that it is not easy to say what is and what is not fiction for these purposes. Is the story of *Lucretia* fiction, within the meaning of this objection? Or has it only become so since the publication of Niebuhr's *History*,

* They are a simple relation of the experience (we believe) of Mr. Barber, transported twelve or thirteen years since for forgery, and pardoned on the discovery of his innocence. See *Household Words*, vol. v., p. 455, &c.

and as to so many people as have read it? Or would it cease to be fiction if its substantial truth were to be established by new evidence?

Would *Mansfield Park* cease to be fiction for the purposes of the objection, if it were to appear that Miss Austen had drawn from the life, and that the grouping and connexion alone of the circumstances were invented by her? Or, if the intention of the author be considered as the test of fiction, it would be necessary to contend that a description of incidents which in all essential particulars occurred as described, ought not to produce emotion, merely because the person describing them was not aware of the degree in which his description coincided with the facts.

The moral effects of novel reading being the enlargement of the reader's knowledge of the world, and the excitement of his feelings, in what respects do such effects differ from those which similar objects might excite in real life? In other words, what adjustments and allowances must we make before the suggestions of novels can be accepted as additions to our experience?

If novels were perfectly-executed pictures of life, they would increase the reader's knowledge of life, just as paintings add to his knowledge of scenery and of incident; but no information, or only very false information, is to be derived from the pictures either of novelists or of painters, unless proper allowance is made, not only for the limitations imposed on them by the rules of their art, but also for the faults of conception and of execution most common amongst them.

One of the most obvious causes which makes novels unlike real life is the necessity under which they lie of being interesting, an object which can only be obtained by a great deal of *suppressio veri*, whence arises that *suggestio falsi* of which it is our object to point out the principal varieties.

Who would infer from one of the trial scenes which occur in almost every one of the *Waverley Novels*, what a real criminal trial was like? The mere *coup d'œil* presented by the judges, the barristers, the prisoner, the witnesses, and the crowd of spectators, might be pretty accurately represented to any sufficiently imaginative reader by the account of the trial of Fergus McIvor and Evan Dhu Maccombich. The *State Trials* would give a juster notion of the interminable length of the indictments, the apparently irrelevant and unmeaning examinations and cross-examinations of witnesses, the skirmishing of the counsel on points of law, and the petitions of the prisoners, often painfully reasonable, for some relaxation of the rules of evidence, or procedure; but to any one who seeks

mere amusement, such reading is intolerably tedious, and even when accomplished, it gives a very faint representation of the actual scene as it appeared to those who sat or stood, day after day, in all the heat, and dust, and foul air of the court-house at Carlisle or Southwark, half understanding, and—as the main points at issue got gradually drowned in their own details—half attending to the proceedings on which the lives and deaths of their friends depended. A man really present on such an occasion, and personally interested, would probably bring away impressions which a life-time would not destroy. In a novel, such a scene is at once more and less interesting than it is in fact. There are more points of interest, more dramatic situations; the circumstances are more clearly defined, and more sharply brought out than they ever would be in real life; but at the same time, that from which such circumstances derive their interest is wanting: the necessity of thought and attention, the consciousness that what is passing is most real and serious business, which it is not open to the spectators to hurry over, or to lay down and take up again at pleasure. In one word, the reality. It is in order to supply the absence of this source of interest that recourse is had to the other.

If we imagine a novel written for a reader seeking, not amusement, but information, it would be not only insupportably dull, but would be more laborious reading than any other kind of literature. Suppose that in addition to the present novel of *Waverley*, we had the muster-roll of Captain Waverley's troop, with extracts from the *Army List* of that time as to Gardiner's dragoons;—suppose we had full statements of the route of the Pretender's army, short-hand writers' notes of the proceedings of all his councils of war;—suppose the MSS. of the Jacobite divinity of Waverley's tutor, or at any rate, the plan of the work, with copious extracts, were actually printed, and all the proceedings against Fergus McIvor, and respecting the pardon of Waverley and the Baron incorporated in the book;—and suppose on the part of the reader sufficient interest and patience to go through all this mass of matter, no one can doubt that he would know much more about Waverley and his fortunes than ordinary readers do know. If, however, *Waverley* had been composed upon this principle, the conversations and descriptions, which give it all its charm, would have been greatly curtailed. A person who had toiled, note-book and atlas in hand, through all sorts of authorities, geographical, historical, antiquarian, and legal, about the Highland line, black-mail, and the heritable jurisdictions, would have little taste for the conversations between Waverley, Rose

Bradwardine, Evan Dhu, and the Baron, upon the same subjects. They contemplate a frame of mind altogether different.*

The *suppressio veri* which occurs in novels may therefore be, considered as an essential feature of that kind of literature, but it involves a *suggestio falsi* which is not so obvious, and has more tendency to mislead readers.

It requires but very little experience of life to be aware that the circumstances stated in a novel form a very small part of what must have actually occurred to the persons represented; but it requires more experience to see in what respects the fact that all dull matter is suppressed, falsifies the representation of what is actually described.

The most remarkable of all the modifications with which novels represent real life consists in the way in which such suppressions distort their representations of character.

These representations differ from the thing represented much as a portrait differs from a real face. A child would probably prefer the portrait to the face, because its colours are more definite, smoother, and less altered by the various disturbing causes which act upon the living body. This difference is a consequence of yielding to the temptation, under which novelists continually labour, of taking an entirely different view of character from those who seek not to represent, but to understand it.

The easiest way of representing character is to represent it as a set of qualities which belong to different men, as colour, weight, and form belong to different substances; to represent brave actions as resulting from a quality of courage in one man, or wise actions from a quality of wisdom in another, just as knives cut because they are sharp, or lead sinks because it is heavy. No one who takes his views of character from life

---

* It has indeed become a sort of commonplace, or what may perhaps be called a secondary commonplace (for which the authority of M. A. Thierry may be pleaded), to extol the representations of novelists and memoir writers over the more authorized mediums of obtaining historical and social knowledge. This surely is confounding facts and possibilities. It may be very true that more knowledge about the relations of the Saxons and Normans after the Conquest is gained from *Ivanhoe* than from Hume's *History*, but that is surely owing to the fact that, for one person who studies Hume and Hume's authorities with sufficient attention to place a clear picture of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries before his mind, thousands will read *Ivanhoe*. It is not because Mr. Macaulay's prefaces to his ballads contain more information than Niebuhr's *History* that they have informed a far greater number of people of the nature of the sources from whence we derive our knowledge of early Rome.

would accept this as a fair representation of it. Whatever ultimate differences not resolvable by any analysis there may be between one man and another, no one can seriously doubt that far the most important differences between men are differences of habit. What we call character is little else than a collection of habits, whether their formation is to be traced to original organic differences or to any other causes.

Almost everybody likes and dislikes the same things. Everybody likes praise, everybody likes knowledge, everybody likes distinction, everybody likes action; but everybody likes rest, and ease, and safety, and dislikes trouble, risk, and defeat. The difference between different people is that in some, for whatever reason, the passions which involve immediate self-denial conquer those which involve immediate self-indulgence, whilst in others the opposite happens, and thus some habits are acquired with great ease and completeness, others at the expense of a good deal of effort and self-restraint, and therefore much less completely. A man may be a very brave man, and yet do very cowardly things, as he may be very prudent, and yet do very foolish things.

Probably no one can look back upon his own history without recalling innumerable inconsistencies in his own conduct and in the conduct of those about him, with the principles which it has been their most earnest desire to recognise, and the habits which they have been forming for years. But though life is full of shortcomings and inconsistencies arising from this cause, novels are not. The difficulty of conceiving or representing differences which vary in every case would of course be very great, and the flow of the story would be interrupted by them. Character, in novels, therefore, is represented as far more homogeneous and consistent than it ever really is. Men are made cowards or brave, foolish or wise, affectionate or morose, just as they are represented as being tall or short, red-haired or black-haired, handsome or ugly.

It is to this origin that we are indebted for the mass of melodramatic or merely conventional characters, which form the staple of some novel writers, and which appear in greater or less numbers even in the most distinguished.

The heroes of the Waverley novels, one and all, belong to this class. They have certain characters assigned to them, and act accordingly throughout the whole story, never rising above or falling below a certain ill-defined, but well-understood, level of thought and conduct which is appropriated to such persons. There is no effort, no incompleteness, about these characters. Any one of them could be described by a certain number of

adjectives. All of them possess certain muscular and amatory qualifications for their office of hero, all of them are brave, most of them generous, some determined, and some irresolute, but none of them display the variety, the incompleteness, the inconsistency, which almost all men show in real life.

If we look either at history or at the very highest class of fiction, we shall find it impossible to exhaust a man's character by adjectives. Who could describe Cromwell, or William III., or Voltaire, or Falstaff, or Hamlet in this manner? It is only by reflection and comparison that we can tell what kind of persons Shakspeare's characters were intended to represent, just as it is only by studying and reflecting upon the different actions of their lives that we can become acquainted with any real personage whatever, historical or contemporary. The great mass of characters in novels may be weighed and measured, and their qualities may be enumerated, with as much ease and precision as we could count the squares in a chess-board, and describe their colours.

A novelist always has some kind of scheme in his mind, according to which he draws his picture; and this scheme becomes sufficiently obvious to the reader long before he has finished the novel. In real life, on the contrary, we are obliged to take people as they come, and to form our opinions of their characters as time and opportunity happen to display them to us.

Men whose opinion is worth anything upon such matters are very cautious indeed in describing characters by a few broad phrases; for no lesson is sooner learnt than that such general language requires to be modified in innumerable ways before it can, with any kind of correctness, be applied to any individual case. In life character is inferred from actions, in most novels actions are ascribed to particular people in order to illustrate the author's conceptions respecting their character. Language, therefore, is as inadequate, when applied to real persons, as it is adequate and exhaustive when applied to the common run of fictitious ones.

Even the most prominent figures in a novel are represented in a very imperfect manner. The object of a fictitious biography is to enlist the curiosity, which a real biography presupposes. It therefore seeks to lay before the reader rather a vivid picture than an historical account of a character. To exhibit a great man as he really is the novelist would have to be himself a greater man than the person represented, and the few cases in which this has really been done are universally recognised as the very highest efforts of genius. Hamlet, King

Lear, and Henry V., Satan in *Paradise Lost*,* and to some extent perhaps Prometheus, not only act as people capable of great things might act, but they absolutely do the great things themselves before us. It is, however, only in the very highest class of fiction that this is possible. In ordinary novels the labour necessary to effect such an object would be improvidently invested. If any one of the numerous biographies of popular clergymen which are so common in the present day were from beginning to end an entire fiction, it would be no doubt the most extraordinary feat of imagination ever performed. But few people, and those members of a very limited class, would care to read it. Novelists, therefore, are generally in the habit of representing people rather by their behaviour in the less than in the more important affairs of life. They say, A. B., being otherwise a remarkable man, acted thus or thus in relation to his marriage. We assume, for the purposes of the novel, that he was a remarkable man *aliunde*, and we consider the representation successful or not according as it corresponds or otherwise with this assumption.

There is always, however, a certain amount of risk that the reader will suppose that the author means to describe a man as he is, instead of giving a mere sketch, more or less perfect, of certain features in his manners. Hence they might come to draw a wider inference from the book than it was calculated to support, and to suppose that, because in this or that particular case, certain qualities were displayed by particular symptoms, there is, therefore, a necessary and universal connexion between the characters and the symptoms. Thus Byron suggests to many persons an association between misery and gloom on the one hand, and genius on the other, though, if we look at the books themselves, we have only Lord Byron's own word for the power or capacity of any kind, of Lara, and the Giaour, and the rest. No doubt he only exercised an author's prerogative in making such statements respecting them as matter of fact; but all that he shows of their characters is not in any way inconsistent with their having been as weak as they were bad. Byron's is an extreme case, but almost every writer who has obtained any considerable popularity has, more or less, misled his readers in this manner. To be able to do so is a proof, which few people can give, of the power of interesting and enlisting sympathy.

The most remarkable instance of this is afforded by Mr. Thackeray. As there is no writer who has shown greater

* Satan's rebellion is made the subject of a substantive description, which is not the case with the theft of Prometheus.

genius in representing a particular view of life, so there is none whose books contain greater omissions, or whose omissions are more likely to mislead, on account of the wonderful impartiality and many-sidedness of his characters. The first impression received from reading almost any one of his books is, that it exhausts the subject to which it refers; but a very little experience will show that the perfection of the observation, so far as it goes, is only equalled by the narrowness of its range. In the whole of Mr. Thackeray's books, there is hardly a hint of such a thing as the serious business in life. All his characters are represented either in their leisure moments, or as men whose whole life is leisure. Hardly any important transaction of any kind whatever (except the usual number of marriages) enters into any one of his books. Even when the course of his story brings him near an event in which the stronger passions and energies are displayed, he instinctively avoids it, often with consummate skill. The wonderful description of the scenes which passed at Brussels, during the battle of Waterloo is, perhaps, the most striking instance of this. *Scriberis Vario* is his constant motto; and we have the actors in one of the greatest scenes in history set before us, as they flirted, and danced, and lounged—not as they planned, and felt, and fought.

There is not in all Mr. Thackeray's novels a character who is described by his great qualities; all are described by their small peculiarities. Yet a man of his genius cannot have failed to observe that men differ from each other far more radically in the great leading habits which they have acquired than in the small affectations or weaknesses by which he generally specifies them. In *Pendennis*, for example, the principal characters are literary barristers, but nothing turns upon their law or their literature, except that it is stated as a matter of fact, that they earned an income by the last. Warrington is represented as being a man of great originality —full of powerful thought, scholarship, and knowledge of various kinds; but we have none of the powerful thought, or scholarship, or knowledge, produced in the book; still less are any incidents introduced to give scope to them. We certainly get the impression that Warrington was a man of vigorous understanding; but we get it from learning that he behaved in the commonest affairs of life as such a man might be supposed to behave, not from any description of the remarkable things which he did. To prove that he really was what Mr. Thackeray calls him, we ought to have had an account of his social, political, and legal opinions, and the reasons why he

adopted them. We ought to have had specimens of his reviews and leading articles.

Suppose two writers had invented, out of their own heads, such a character as Lord Chatham, and that one of them had described him talking to his sons, rehearsing his orations, flannel and crutch all prepared, keeping five or six dinners cooking all at once, and so forth; and that the other had invented the whole scheme of his policy in relation to the Seven Years' War, and had composed and put into his mouth the speeches which he made about the American Revolution. The first would have shown how a great man might behave, and the second would have shown what a great man was. The mistake into which such novels as Mr. Thackeray's might easily lead an inexperienced person, is the supposition that he had read a book of the second, and not of the first kind.

We do not venture to criticise Mr. Thackeray's choice of characters. We only wish to point out that the very perfection with which parts of them are represented might lead some persons to suppose that the representation is more complete than Mr. Thackeray meant it to be.

It would be difficult to find in Mr. Thackeray's works an example of another fault, very common amongst novelists, and perhaps more fatal than any other to the correctness of their representations of life. In fact, his whole career may be considered as a protest against it. This is what Mr. Macaulay has called the *lues Boswelliana*, applied to the creations of a man's own brain.

The hero-worship of authors is a love passing the love of women. The hero of a novel is the child of the author's experience, of his love, of his passions, of his vanity, of his philosophy; yet he is not a picture of himself in such a sense as to establish between them that unlimited liability for each others' shortcomings which is the essence of partnership. A hero is an embodied day-dream, with paper and ink for flesh and blood; and all of us know how large a part we ourselves play in our own day-dreams. The hero of a novel may not be like the author. He may be ludicrously unlike; but it is hardly possible that the furniture of his mind should not have been supplied by the author from his own mental stores, although its arrangement in the two men may differ. The reason is, that we know our own feelings, but we only know other men's actions, and infer from them that they feel as we should feel if we were to act in the same manner. Therefore, when we are to describe feelings as they present themselves to us upon introspection, and not as we view them in, or infer them from, other people's acts, we must necessarily draw from

ourselves, as we have no other models. I know that when A. was angry he spoke harshly, that B. imputed ungenerous motives, that C. misrepresented, and so on; but I can only infer the feelings of A., B., and C., when they so acted, from my own experience of my own feelings when I acted in the same way. But though a writer cannot but invest his characters with many of his own feelings, he by no means necessarily identifies himself with all or any of them. Conscious that he is likely to be charged with drawing from himself, he probably avoids doing so explicitly and consciously, whilst he allows the favourite points of his own character to look out upon him, more or less, from his canvas. An author, under such circumstances, has some resemblance to an artist colouring a photograph. The main lines are drawn for him, and recal his own features, but he is at liberty to add what he pleases. Sometimes, probably, he paints his hero as he would wish to be, sometimes as he would wish not to be; but, unless such characters as he represents at full length, with all their feelings and mental peculiarities, have some relation to him, it is hard to say to what they are related.

Whatever may be the origin of the fact, we take the fact to be quite certain, that there is a large class of novels in which all the incidents are arranged so as to give prominence to one particular view of life, and to present it, as it might be supposed to present itself to the eyes of some one person, who, (with some modifications) acts as hero in a whole series of novels.

Perhaps there is no one thing which so entirely distorts facts as this habit. It is like looking at the world through coloured spectacles; and it engenders a wretched class of imitators, who, as we seriously believe, do harm in society.

The vexed question, as to the morality of representing bad characters in a novel, is possibly to be solved upon this principle. If it is universally true that the representation of wicked characters is objectionable, it would be hard to deny that all representation of human character is objectionable; inasmuch as there is no character which does not contain some admixture of wickedness. On the other hand, it is impossible to deny that there are some vices which can hardly be represented without mischief both to the writer and the reader. It would appear that the morality or immorality of such representations by no means depends upon the heinousness of the characters described. It would be difficult to imagine a more wicked character than Iago, or a less immoral play than *Othello*. The Bible is full of descriptions of most atrocious crimes of all sorts, and it would be natural to suppose

that the fact that they are related historically would make them more, and not less, injurious than they would be if related as fictions, because the interest is greater.

The moral effect of men upon each other depends upon their intimacy. No one is made wicked by knowing that bad people exist. Most people would become wicked if all their intimate friends were so. Characters in novels may be considered as being more or less intimate acquaintances, and as they are represented upon two different principles, they may be divided into two classes.

The characters of one class are represented from without—those of the other class from within. The classification is neither exact nor complete, because almost all characters are depicted partly from one point of view, partly from the other; but these are the limits towards which such representations approximate in a greater or less degree. We should say that the latter class exercise very little moral influence over any one. They are merely more or less honest and accurate representations of facts. The other class of characters exercises the same *kind* of influence over readers as actual acquaintance with the living persons. In order to ascertain the *degree* of influence, we must not only suppose the acquaintanceship to have been limited to the time consumed in reading or thinking over the novel, and to the circumstances mentioned in it, but as existing subject to those deductions which we have indicated above as implied in the existence of novels. How far such acquaintanceship is injurious or otherwise, is a question for individuals.

It is to be observed, however, that the immoral writing which gives the greatest and most reasonable offence, is immoral specifically, and consists of detailed descriptions of subjects on which the mind cannot be suffered to rest without injury. This class of offences is mostly of a sufficiently obvious kind. It is nearly allied to what, in our own time and country, is a far more probable evil—a conscious delicacy, which suggests improper thoughts by carefully avoiding all mention of vices which must be referred to if life is to be depicted at all, and which would excite no improper feelings if referred to without unnecessary detail.

The secondary characters in a novel are, perhaps, even more distorted than the heroes. The existence of a plot makes it necessary to represent men and women in their relation to the groups of which they form parts, and not substantively. Hence the different personages have apparently a much closer connexion, and more intimate sympathy with each other, than they would have under similar circumstances in real life.

If *The Antiquary*, for example, had been a real history, it would have been incorrect, amongst other things, in representing Lovel, the antiquary, Sir Arthur Wardour, and the rest of the characters, as taking a much deeper interest in each other than they did in fact. If Jonathan Oldbuck had been a real man, he would have had, after a very few years, to consider and recollect himself before he could say precisely in which year it was that Miss Wardour was married, and he would have been far more likely to have fixed the date of her marriage by its coincidence with some of his every-day business, than to have dated his dissertations from it. This is not the impression which the novel leaves on the reader's mind.

He considers all its characters as forming one group, and as taking that kind of intimate interest in each others' fortunes which they would take if they formed such a group by nature, instead of being compressed into it for artistic purposes. The connexion stated between the different characters of a novel, is generally such as in real life would attract but little attention; but the fact that nothing is known of such characters, except what is contained in the novel, makes the reader forget that in real life the secondary characters would have histories of their own, and suggests to him the conclusion, that they had nothing else to love or care for in life except the hero and heroine, and nothing to look forward to except their marriage. If a distant mountain range forms the background of a picture, it is represented by very few and very slight strokes of the brush; but if the rest of the picture were cut away, no one would know that these strokes were intended to represent mountains, nor would any one, on seeing real mountains, recognise them by their resemblance to those so represented.

In the same way the less prominent characters of a novel are only like one particular aspect of the real persons, and not only throw almost no light at all upon such characters in real life, but sometimes mislead people into the notion that, by reason of their acquaintance with some of their prominent peculiarities, they are better acquainted with them than is, in fact, the case.

For example, there is, in one of Sir E. Lytton's novels, an old soldier whose character it is, to boast of his selfishness and knowledge of the world. In another, the hero lodges with a man whose character it is to keep constantly making the same pun about rolls and swallows. In a third, there is a strolling vagabond, whose character it is to quote scraps of Shakspeare. All of these men would, in real life, have had a great deal more in them than this; they would have had

schemes, objects in life, connexions, talents—in a word, characters,—and such caprices as these would go but a very little way towards displaying them.

It is a great beauty in a novel to give glimpses of the life which the secondary characters lived when they were not within the field of the novelist's camera obscura. In *Pendennis* we get a most ingeniously contrived glimpse of the career of the gentleman who lent his chambers to the hero. How he was presented at court, and entangled himself in a lady's train, who turned out to be the daughter of 'that eminent Queen's Counsel, Mr. Kewsy,' who subsequently became his wife, and he a county-court judge. Many writers would have left on their readers no other impression about this person than that he had lent Mr. Pendennis his chambers, and was in the habit of making some pet speech, or indulging some whimsical caprice.

The incompleteness, and consequent incorrectness of the information conveyed by novels, distorts facts even more than characters. The most familiar of all illustrations of the defect is to be found in novels of adventure. Captain Marryat, Cooper, and other writers of that class, not only suppress a great many facts for the sake of interest, but, by the very fact of such suppression, they entirely falsify the characters of those which are represented.

Thus, Captain Marryat leaves on the mind the impression that curious companions, strange adventures, and ever-changing excitement, in one shape or another, are the staple of a sailor's life, instead of being exceptional occurrences. Compare Southey's *Life of Nelson*, with its dreary tracts of blockading, cruising, delay, and disappointments of all kinds,—or a volume of James's *Naval History*, with its indecisive, unromantic actions and enterprises,—with *Peter Simple* or *Midshipman Easy*, which are one continued series of wonderful storms and battles, and the nature of the varnish applied by novelists to reality will become curiously evident. This is an extreme case, but the same principle must be applied more or less to all novels before their suggestions can be accepted as fair representations of life. Even Miss Austen, whose books convey an impression of reality altogether extraordinary, culls out and pieces together a succession of small incidents, so contrived as to develop, step by step, the characters of the persons represented. Each incident, taken by itself, is so exquisitely natural, and so carefully introduced, that it requires considerable attention to detect the improbability of the story. That improbability consists in the sequence of the incidents wanted. It is likely enough that incidents should sometimes

happen which throw a light on character, but it is not probable that a series of incidents should occur, one after the other, all throwing light on different parts of the same character, as if they had been arranged for the express purpose of bringing out every feature of it in succession. Nor must it be forgotten that the importance and significance of an incident is much greater when it is one in a series, as in a novel, than where it stands by itself, as in real life.

The circumstances which, when combined and arranged, form a novel, would, in reality, lie widely scattered over the surface of life, the attention of the actors in them being diverted to other affairs, quite unfit for the purposes of a novelist. Thus, when any of these events occurred, it would not strike those who were concerned in it, or who were witnesses of it, as being in any degree a romantic incident. Its connexion with the other circumstances which impart to it its romantic character, would be so overlaid by the other affairs of life, that their relation to each other would escape observation.

Few novels have been written with a plot more elaborately contrived, or dexterously brought out, than *Caleb Williams;* but would the circumstances have impressed themselves upon the mind of a person who witnessed their real occurrence in the connected pictorial manner in which they appear to the readers of the novel?

Caleb Williams is taken into the service of a rich gentleman, Mr. Falkland, whom he discovers to have murdered Mr. Tyrrel, some years before. Incautiously informing his master of his discovery, he tempts him to take advantage of an opportunity of accusing him, with every appearance of truth, of committing an aggravated robbery. His master, satisfied with destroying his character, offers no evidence against him at the trial, and he is acquitted. Wherever he goes he is followed by Falkland's agents, who expose his character and deprive him of one situation after another, until, at last, he resolves to turn upon his master in self-defence, reiterates accusations (which he had formerly made and retracted) of the murder of Tyrrel, and choosing his time for the accusation*

---

* It is a curious instance of the almost universal inability of novelists to write about law without making mistakes, that Godwin, who had a considerable acquaintance with criminal law, forgets that Falkland could not be tried a second time for the murder of Tyrrel, although he seems quite aware that Williams could not be tried twice for the theft.

In Miss Bronte's remarkable novel, *Wuthering Heights*, the legal relations of the different characters towards the close of the book are most perplexed. They involve a perfect wilderness of questions about

ingeniously, extorts from Mr. Falkland a confession, not only of his murder of Tyrrel, but of the falsehood of his accusations against himself.

Nothing can be more remarkable than the skill with which this story is developed step by step, each leading to, and each bearing upon the next. But if we suppose the events really to have occurred, would any ordinary person have remarked their connexion? In the novel, Caleb Williams's introduction to Falkland's house, and the story he hears from the steward about his master's history, at once arrest the reader's attention, and introduce all that follows. In real life, the gossip of two servants about their master's affairs would attract no attention at all, or would only be noticed as one of the little vexations incidental to keeping a large establishment. When Falkland has been introduced in a manner calculated to awaken attention and curiosity, a variety of small characteristic conversations and allusions—immediately detected by the least experienced novel reader as being characteristic and important—are introduced in order to heighten the mystery and curiosity. In real life, such things would have passed unnoticed, or, if noticed, any one but a confirmed meddler and gossip would have set them down to the account of casual ill-temper or bad digestion, or to any other insignificant cause. The transaction about the robbery would have amounted to this—that there was strong reason to suppose a clerk had robbed his master; that there was a kind of possibility that the master wanted to get rid of the clerk; and so the matter would have stood for many months, and in the meantime Falkland, and his rela-

---

disseisin, forcible entries, mortgages, and the wills and marriages of minors. Even Mr. Thackeray, generally so careful in such matters, falls, we conceive, into a legal mistake in *The Newcomes*. Mrs. Newcome leaves behind her a letter to her attorney written on the day of her death (before 1838) saying in effect, 'I desire to bequeath' 5000*l.* to Clive Newcome. 'Prepare a codicil to my will to that effect, and bring it on Saturday.' This is written on Tuesday, on which day she dies. Mr. Pendennis, on the discovery of the letter, tells Miss Newcome that 'it is not worth a penny,' being only 'a wish on the part of Mrs. Newcome,' and Mr. Luce, the attorney, confirms this.

Now, in *Passmore* v. *Passmore*, 1 *Phillim.* 218, Sir J. Nicholl expressly says, 'That the instrument as in the form of a letter is no conclusive objection to it,—nor has it been held necessary that they' (such instruments) 'should be in direct and imperative terms, *wishes and requests have been deemed sufficient.*'

In *Allen* v. *Manning*, 2 *Add.* 490, instructions to an attorney to prepare a will were admitted to probate on the ground that the testator died five days after giving them, and before he could execute the will. See, too, *Torre* v. *Castle*, 1 *Curt.* 303, and *Hattat* v. *Hattat*, 4 *Hagg.* 411. This would be somewhat minute criticism, if it were not for the fact, that Mr. Pendennis gives his opinion expressly as a lawyer.

tions, and servants, and acquaintance would have hardly given a thought to Caleb Williams and his affairs. They would have had business, and formed habits and connexions far more interesting to themselves than any in which Williams had a part, and he and his trial would have subtended a very small angle indeed in their range of vision, instead of forming, as by the novelist's art they are made to do, the centre upon which all their fortunes depend.

Perhaps the necessity of modifying the representation made by novels of the different events which occur in them, may be more fully illustrated by supposing that the story of *Caleb Williams* is only his way of accounting for, and connecting, certain admitted facts: such as the fact that Mr. Tyrrel was murdered; that Mr. Falkland was tried for the murder, and acquitted; that he led a retired life; that Caleb Williams was taken into his service, and left it under an accusation, true or false, of robbery; that Williams was committed to gaol; that he escaped, was retaken, tried, and, by the kindness of his prosecutor, acquitted; that he wandered about the country, and lost situations from a report of his conduct; that he went to Mr. Falkland's house during his last illness, accused him of murder, and caused him to make certain statements. Might it not be open to Mr. Falkland's friends to contend, and would they not contend with the greatest force, that the story was all false from beginning to end, and that it bore upon it every mark of being so; that all the tales about Falkland's conversations with Williams were mere fictions, artfully constructed on information obtained from a gossiping old man, in order to supply a means of explaining conduct which was in fact a treacherous robbery of a master by a confidential servant; that Williams's escape from prison was a confession of guilt; that his subsequent acquittal was simply owing to his master's reluctance to have him hanged; that his loss of his situations was the natural and necessary consequence of his crime; that his report of Falkland's last conversation was a garbled account of the weak, confused language of a dying man about matters in which he had at any rate suffered most cruelly; and that to suppose Falkland guilty of murder merely because a discharged servant, who had formerly made and retracted the same accusation, a probable robber, and a man who, according to his own confession, associated with a gang of highwaymen, said that his master had chosen him of all mankind as his confessor, would be to consider the solemn verdict of a jury as less cogent than the unsupported evidence of a single interested and untrustworthy witness.

This, however, is not the impression which the mere perusal

of the novel leaves upon the mind. It is of the essence of a novel to assume not only the infallibility of the narrator as to the matters of fact which he relates, but also as to the bearing of the facts related upon each other; and it would lead to constant mistakes to suppose that the circumstances which in a novel prove the guilt, or the love, or the wisdom, which the novelist attributes to his hero, would prove the same things in real life. A still more curious illustration of this is the alterations of facts which occur in historical novels. As novels cannot be taken to be histories without a good deal of management and allowance, so history cannot be readily woven into novels without corresponding distortions.

Two curious instances of this are to be found in Colonel Everard, the hero of *Woodstock*, and Henry Morton, the hero of *Old Mortality*. Characters of that stamp were not likely to be found amongst Puritans or Covenanters. Sir Walter Scott was not the man to enter into the feelings either of Cromwell or of Balfour of Burley, in such a manner as to make their passions real objects of interest. Inasmuch, however, as some hero with whom his readers could sympathize was necessary, he provides two young men who talk the language and think the thoughts of the end of the eighteenth century to the men of the seventeenth, with a sort of unconscious simplicity and *bonâ fide* belief in their own superiority over those amongst whom they live, which is not only curious in itself, but is especially curious as an illustration of the radical differences between romance and history.

There is something in the quiet, easy, plausible solution of all the difficulties, which seemed so vital to all the greatest men of their time, at which Everard and Morton have arrived, and in the calm superiority with which they estimate and patronize them, with more or less disapproval, which in real life would be contemptible, but which in a novel does not exactly shock us, because we understand, or at any rate feel, its congruity with the scope of such books. Far the most curious illustration of this predominance of the novel atmosphere over fact which we can remember, is to be found in Mr. Lockhart's novel of *Valerius*. The curious Paleyan process by which Valerius, on reading a MS. of one of the Gospels lent him by a Christian under persecution, becomes convinced of 'the candour and veracity of the author,' would have astonished the contemporaries of Origen about as much as the acquisition of an estate worth something like a million and a half sterling as the providential reward of a pagan's conversion to Christianity.

Somewhat similar in its effects is the habit of supposing that

the importance of events in real life is commensurate with their importance in novels. The well-known dogma of Aristotle, that the object of a tragedy is to excite terror and pity, might be paraphrased by saying that it is the object of a novel to describe love ending in marriage. Marriage in novels occupies almost always the position which death occupies in real life: it is the art of transition into a new state, with which novelists (with some very rare exceptions) have little or nothing to do. No doubt, a happy marriage is to a woman what success in any of the careers of life is to a man. It is almost the only profession which society, as at present constituted, opens to her. The mistake of novelists lies not so much in overrating the importance of marriage, as in the assumed universality of the passion of love, in their sense of the word. The notion which so many novels suggest—that if two people who have a violent passion for each other marry, they have necessarily acted wisely,—is as unfounded as the converse, that if two people marry without such a passion, they act unwisely.

It would be impossible for any one to dispute altogether the existence of some such passion as is the foundation of most novels; but it may safely be affirmed that it is very uncommon, that it is a very doubtful good when it exists, and that the love which the Prayer Book seems to consider as a condition subsequent to marriage, is something much more common and very different. In novels it is considered as the cause, in the Prayer Book as what ought to be the effect of marriage; and we suspect that the divines have been shrewder observers of human nature than the men of the world. In the morality of almost all novelists, the promise ought to be, not 'I will love,' but 'I declare that I do love.' The wisdom or otherwise of a step upon which so much of the happiness of life must turn, is made to depend, not on the mutual forbearance and kindly exertions of the two persons principally interested, but upon their feeling an exceptional and transitory passion at a particular moment.

To attempt to give an accurate definition, or even description of love, would be presumptuous, if not pedantic; but it may safely be affirmed that one of its most important constituent parts, if not its essence, is to be found in a willingness to discharge the duties implied in the relation of the persons loving, in order to please or benefit each other. Love between the sexes is not the only kind of love in the world. Its specific peculiarities arise, like the specific peculiarities of all other kinds of love, from the peculiar relations and duties implied in the relation of husband and wife, which, however, operate principally by giving colour to the common

sentiments of friendship and confidence, and, above all, to those which spring from the habits of society. To use the language of a very great man (employed in maintaining a proposition which to some may seem questionable)—

> It must be carefully remembered, that the general happiness of married life is secured by its indissolubility. When people understand that they must live together, except for a very few reasons known to the law, they learn to soften, by mutual accommodation, that yoke which they know they cannot shake off, and become good husbands and good wives from the necessity of remaining husbands and wives. For necessity is a powerful master in teaching the duties. If it were once understood that, upon mutual disgust, married persons might be legally separated, many a couple who now pass through the world with mutual comfort, with attention to their common offspring, and to the moral order of civil society, might have been at this moment living in a state of mutual unkindness, in a state of estrangement from their common offspring, in a state of the most licentious morality.*

The habit of finishing a novel with the marriage of the hero and heroine, is quite in accordance with the view of love which we have been reprobating. It would seem ludicrous to conclude the history of a man's professional career with the act of his entering upon his profession; but it is an all but universal practice to conclude a representation of him, as a social and feeling being, with his marriage. Why? Because a person is supposed to enter on a profession in order to do something in it, and to marry only to gratify his passions.

The necessity of interesting the reader by what is represented, and the necessity of suppressing all that is dull, taken together, are the reasons why novelists fall into the habit of distorting facts in order to produce an unnatural excitement of feeling.

In real life, the announcement of a person's death, or marriage, produces a certain effect, varying with our attachment to the person concerned. The same announcement about a fictitious character would produce no effect at all by its own weight; therefore, in order to make it affecting, novelists are obliged to have recourse to what we now call sentimentality. 'Affectation,' if the word were used in a more restricted sense than it generally bears, would be a more correct, though perhaps less expressive, name for the habit of mind which we wish to describe.

Etymologically, 'sentimental' ought to mean, capable of

---

* Judgment of Lord Stowell in *Evans* v. *Evans*. 1 *Hagg. Cons. Rep.* 36, 37.

sentiment; and, inasmuch as sentiment is nothing else than feeling, every man, and indeed every animal, might be described as being in that sense 'sentimental;' but the meaning which we popularly attach to the word has become considerably extended in some respects, and much narrowed in others. It denotes, not a capability of any sort of feeling, but the habitual indulgence of one particular class of feelings; that is to say, tenderness, and principally tenderness by way of association, and it is seldom used without implying disapprobation. There are certain secondary pleasures attendant upon almost all kinds of sorrow. Sorrow calls out many good qualities, the recollection of which is in itself pleasant. The sorrow of others furnishes an occasion for the feelings of pity and generosity, as well as for that less amiable gratification implied in the '*Suave mari magno*.' There is a certain interest and sympathy of which people in unfortunate circumstances are the object, both at their own hands and at the hands of others, such as Charles Lamb has very agreeably described in his essay on the *Pleasures of Sickness*. Now, when a man describes sorrow in writing, painting, or speaking, not substantively, but with an eye to these alleviations and associations, we call such a description sentimental. Thus, the description of Lefevre's death, in *Tristram Shandy*, is sentimental, because it is impossible to read it without feeling that it is introduced in order to set off Uncle Toby's generosity and Lefevre's affection for his son; but no one would call Burns' address to *Mary in Heaven* sentimental, because there the grief is the substantive part of the poem, and the description of scenery merely an accessory.

For our present purposes, therefore, 'sentimentality' may be described as being that way of writing which makes use of emotions of tenderness or the like, as accessories for the purpose of heightening an artistic effect, whether that effect is to be produced by the description of other feelings, or merely by the skilful handling of details. The state of human affairs is probably such that no one could conceive a consistent story without being naturally and unavoidably led to describe many painful things, and no one can be blamed for describing such subjects in a spirited manner, if he describes them gravely, and because they lie straight in his path; but we do not know of a habit more likely to injure the interests, both of art and of morals, than that of describing death and kindred subjects as accessories to matters of inferior importance, or for the sake of displaying skill in handling details.

There is one writer in our own day who entirely exemplifies our meaning: this is Mr. Dickens.

We will take only one instance of his sentimentality,—his treatment of the subject of death. There are some aspects of death of which we wish to say nothing; but if we consider it simply as it affects the survivors, it cannot be regarded as connected exclusively with painful associations. The feelings excited by the death of a friend are, first, a feeling of solemn awe, which is not deepened, but weakened, by anything which diverts the attention from the naked fact. 'He is dead,' is all that is to be said upon the subject; and any phrases whatever beyond that or its equivalents have a tendency to distract the mind, and so far to lessen the solemnity of the feelings excited. It would not be true to say that this sensation is entirely painful. To a sluggish imagination, the mere excitement is far from being altogether unpleasant. The dim view of a world of mysteries, in the midst of which we live and move, has something in it which relieves the tedium and ennobles the trivialities of common life; but when we weigh this against the utter separation, the end—for aught we know, the final end—of so many kindly sympathies and warm activities, there is something loathsome in the notion of a man's being willing to call up the one set of associations for the sake of playing with the other; and when we recollect the lighter associations which accompany death, the expressions of affection, the leave-takings, the little touching incidents to which the unconscious simplicity of the dying person may give rise, we cannot but feel that the mere recollection of such things involves an unutterable, an almost sacred sadness, and that there is an absence of feeling in displaying that which gives them all their sadness in order to set off their beauty, which reminds us of nothing so much as the mumbling satisfaction of the old Grandmother in the *Antiquary*, at the wine and cakes handed round at her grandson's funeral. Now, Mr. Dickens, not once or twice, but continually, brings death upon the stage, apparently for no one reason but that of showing his skill in arranging affecting details so as to give them this horrible pungency. Paul Dombey, Eleanor Trent, Dora Copperfield, Richard Carstone (who dies partly to spite the Court of Chancery, and partly to give Miss Summerson an opportunity of showing how conscious she is of her unconscious sweetness and piety), Oliver Twist's mother, and Smike,* are a few of the instances which occur to us of this toying with

* A list of the killed, wounded, and missing amongst Mr. Dickens's novels would read like an *Extraordinary Gazette*. An interesting child runs as much risk there as any of the troops who stormed the Redan.

the disgrace of our nature. We do not wish to write lightly on such a subject; but let us compare Mr. Dickens's treatment of death with some others.

Having to describe the death of a young woman who dies very unnecessarily, after rambling about the country with her grandfather, Mr. Dickens first introduces a little boy dying quietly enough, then he brings in an old sexton of seventy-nine, whose peculiarity is that he does *not* die, and does not expect to do so. Appended to the sexton are a church and out-houses, with carved wainscots, and windows looking out on the graves. Having arranged the scene, we have the time—a winter night and a snow-storm,—and the chorus, in the shape of all sorts of anxious admirers; then comes the scene over which so many foolish tears have been shed, and which reminds us of nothing so much as the hackneyed quotation about the difficulty of driving a dog from a greasy hide. He gloats over the girl's death as if it delighted him; he looks at it from four or five points of view; touches, tastes, smells, and handles as if it was some savoury dainty which could not be too fully appreciated.

The description consists of six paragraphs (some in blank verse) of which three begin with the words, 'She was dead.' The first is introductory; the second describes her as being asleep; the third relates to the bed; the fourth to a certain bird; the fifth to the subject's beautiful appearance; and the sixth to its face. The whole concludes with a questionable statement as to what the angels will look like, which suggests that even upon artistic grounds it is as well not to intrude into things which we have not seen.

Perhaps the prophet Ezekiel thought of death as solemnly as Mr. Dickens, and loved his wife as much as Mr. Dickens cared for his little tragedy queen; but he tells us nothing of her bed, nor of what he put on it, nor about her face, nor her bird—

Ezekiel xxiv. 15-18.—'Son of man, behold I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke, yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thy head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thy lips, and eat not the bread of men. So I spake unto the people in the morning, and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.'

Though Ezekiel was commanded not to mourn, it does not appear that he was forbidden to linger on the details of his wife's death, to describe her face, her bed, her ornaments, and to put little bits of pretty simplicity into her mouth. But

he was not only an inspired prophet, but a brave man, who wrote with modesty and self-respect.

This is but one illustration out of ten thousand, of the spirit which leads people to indulge their timidity or their love of luxury, by disregarding the essential points of observation for the sake of accessories, and instead of looking death, and grief, and pain in the face, to trifle with the dramatic incidents by which they may be attended.

Another consequence of the suppression of so large a proportion of the facts which in real life carry on the business of the world is to be found in the invention of masses of what the critics in the last century used to call 'machinery,' and what is perhaps better known in the present day under its theatrical slang name of 'business.' Almost every author has his *Di minorum* or *majorum gentium* in reserve for such knots as may occur in his story. Scott or Sir E. Lytton have generally some funny man—some Andrew Fairservice, or Corporal Bung—hanging about the story, ready to help matters on as a kind of prose comic chorus, or to disentangle any embarrassment which may arise, by throwing an air of absurdity over it.

If hardship, or poverty, or sickness is to be represented, almost all writers of novels bring in a Caleb Balderstone, to invent shifts for filling his hero's larder, or a Mrs. Flanagan, to steal his spirits under pretence of giving him medicine, that the reader's mind may not be unduly shocked.

Mr. Dickens seems to us the greatest master of this kind of artifice, but his method is most peculiar. It consists in giving an entirely factitious prominence to minute peculiarities. He constantly gives expression, almost personality, to inanimate objects. He invests the most ordinary affairs of life with a certain charm and poetry. It is abundantly clear that this is what none but a man of genius could do. Nor is it an illusion which would be likely to deceive any one. Nobody ever lived in the world without finding plenty of dulness in it, and no quantity of verbal artifice would make him forget it; but though artifices like these may not deceive, they are still deviations from reality, and are to be allowed for before a novel can be considered as a picture of life.

There are dwarfs in real life, and the circumstance of bodily deformity no doubt exercises a powerful influence over character, but a little imp, with some slight resemblance to a man and a vast preponderance of the devil, like Quilp, or a 'recluse,' like the Black Dwarf, are what Addison calls 'machines' peculiar to novelists, and without representatives in real life.

Descriptions of scenery, especially in modern novels, often act as machines. We are tolerant of improbability and of gaps

in a story, such as 'Five years elapsed,' &c. &c., when they are covered by pictures of still life, such as the charming descriptions of South America, which fill up about half a volume and three very uneventful years in the wanderings of Sir Amyas Leigh, knight. Such, too, are some of Mr. Dickens's descriptions of nature, which contain extremely picturesque sentences, but generally offend our taste by their obvious effort and elaboration; such, for example, is the account of the great storm at Yarmouth or of the Swiss valley, in *David Copperfield.* They would furnish very good drop-scenes to a theatre; but in the history of a man's life we can dispense with drop-scenes.* The descriptions of nature in *Gil Blas,* in Defoe, occasionally in Fielding, and continually in Smollett, are never obtrusive or over elaborate. They are the simple vivid impression left by striking scenery upon men who had no inclination to go about the world in the spirit of landscape painters, but who could appreciate a fine view when it came in their way. Gil Blas' journey through the Asturias, the Cavaliers' wanderings in Yorkshire, the hill on which Tom Jones and Partridge lost their way, and the infinite variety of pictures hinted at rather than drawn, in Roderick Random's journey to London, are instances of our meaning.

It is a great beauty in a novel, when the story, as it were, tells itself, without the introduction of machines to help it out.

Perhaps the most remarkable result of the arbitrary power which novel writers exercise in the selection of facts to be represented and facts to be suppressed, is to be found in the morality which they teach.

Nothing is more common than for novel writers to set out

---

* It may be worth while to remark that Mr. Dickens often writes unintentional verse, like the '*Urbem Romam a principio reges habuere,*' or the iambics, which occur sometimes in *Thucydides.* For example:

'Yoho, beside the village green,'
Where cricket players linger yet,
And every little indentation made
In the fresh grass
By bat or wicket, ball, or player's foot,
Sheds out its perfume on the night. Away,
With four fresh horses from the Bald-faced Stag.'

The last line is wonderfully Tennysonian. The following description of the shadow of a mail-coach might have well been written by Wordsworth:—

'Yoho, yoho, through ditch and brake,
Upon the ploughed land and the smooth,
Along the steep hill-side and steeper wall,
As if it were a Phantom Hunter.'

with the assumption of the truth of certain maxims of morality, and to arrange the facts of their story upon the hypothesis that every violation of those maxims entails all sorts of calamity; instead of looking at the world, and seeing for themselves whether, in point of fact; experience confirms them in the notions which they have formed as to the sanctions provided for the enforcement of such maxims. Those who act thus do not see that the honour which they intend to pay to morality is mere lip-service, and conceals a real doubt as to whether there is such a thing as a natural sanction of morality at all. If they believe that human nature and society are so constituted that the laws of morality are self-executing, they ought to recollect that the sanctions are adjusted by some fixed rule, and if so, the question, what those sanctions are, can be learnt only from experience.

Miss Edgeworth affords perhaps the most complete instance of this fault, and it is almost the only blemish which we can think of in her admirable works. Indeed, her morals are so good, so kindly, and so wise, that it seems unnatural to find fault with them. The number of capital punishments for small offences in her moral tales and tales of fashionable life is dreadful. No one, we suppose, would doubt the evils of procrastination, but it is not a fair representation of life to call as a witness to its bad effects a man of great talents and many opportunities, who is five or six times on the point of making his fortune, and is as often baffled by putting something off which he might have done before. The character might, we apprehend, be objected to on artistic grounds. No one would be so inveterately and invariably procrastinating as the unhappy Mr. Lowe; but independently of this, secondary punishments would, we think, have answered Miss Edgeworth's purpose quite as well, and have been much more true to nature. She might have made him miss one or two openings in life, and succeed less well in others than a more punctual man; but in her anxiety to preach up punctuality, she seems to forget that there is no good in being punctual if a man cannot do his business when he has kept his appointment.

A novel with a moral bears the same relation to other novels as a panegyric to a biography. Instead of illustrating the particular virtues of his subject simply and naturally, the novelist is always on the watch for opportunities of bringing them in at any cost, and, if we may trust our own experience, seldom fails to make the reader utterly rebel against the maxim, or hero, as the case may be.

There are, indeed, cases in which morals become absolute Juggernauts, and the more questionable they are the bloodier

are the sacrifices which they obtain. We do not recollect a more salient example of this than the fate of all the low-church-men, freethinkers, and Jesuits introduced into *Hawkstone*. The account stands thus:—

Bentley. For being an evangelical clergyman, and for having belonged to a debating club at Cambridge—Subjected to extortion of money by threats of false accusations, unlawfully detained in custody, twice nearly murdered, and thrown at last into a quasi convent, by way of restitution.

Webster. For Atheism—Falls into melted lead, falling on his hands in the first instance, and sinking slowly on his face.

Pearce. For being a Jesuit—Eaten by rats in a secret passage of his own contrivance. From the position of what was left of him, it appeared that the vital parts had been attacked last.

The old French penal code was merciful compared to this. Webster, perhaps, might have met with treatment not materially milder at the hands of the judges who sentenced Damien and La Barre, but the fate of Jesuits in the time of Louis XV., or of Jansenists in that of Louis XIV., was far more tolerable than that of heretics convicted by the inexorable and infallible author of *Hawkstone*.

A parallel instance is that of Eugene Sue, whom the author of *Hawkstone* so much resembles, and with whom, we suppose, he so fully sympathises. Jesuits, hypocrites, and immoral persons generally, get their poetical justice served out, like the boiling pitch which Robinson Crusoe's cook distributed amongst the Chinese. Dying of recondite diseases, having holes burnt in their flesh with blow-pipes, being blinded, and kicked in tender parts,—and in some of the less serious cases, drowning, hanging, guillotining, and other not very painful forms of death, are the punishments with which M. Sue visits the crimes which he takes so much pleasure in describing; and no doubt it is fair enough to hang all the characters, if the scene is always laid in Newgate.

Poetical justice is, however, not confined to such instances as these: it extends far higher, and is a taint from which few authors have escaped. Sir Edward Lytton generally puts on the black cap when his hero and heroine are, or are about to be, married. Surely the execution of Randal Leslie, in the last chapter of *My Novel*, is very unnecessary. The character is certainly abundantly mean and base; but his very selfishness and insensibility of conscience would have prevented him from throwing up the game of life, which he had played so unscrupulously, merely because he was discovered in discreditable tricks by a set of people who must have kept their discoveries

to themselves, for fear of compromising the character of their connexions. Leslie must have known very well that the wish to protect the character of the lady whom he had injured from public discussion, would have been quite motive enough to prevent his exposure by his former friends; and that many paths of life were open to him in which he might gratify his ambition. Instead of doing so, he utterly ruins himself, taking some trouble to do it, and takes to drinking, merely from a sense of duty to Sir E. Lytton; and because he feels that if a wicked man in a novel were to become rich, all the foundations of morality would be out of course. George Sand's works abound in curious instances of an inverted poetical justice. We think it would be hard to prove that the arrangements of life, and the existing notions of morality, uniformly produce misery.

In this, as in almost every department of novel literature, Mr. Thackeray appears to us to have conferred immense benefits on novel readers. He is the only writer that we know who does not shrink from allowing all kinds of villany to go unpunished, except by its own badness, and who makes his readers feel without preaching or effort how complete a punishment that is. The reason of this may perhaps be, that few authors feel so strongly as Mr. Thackeray that mere wealth and success in life are not all that we ought to live or to wish for; and that it is a beggarly reward, after all, for goodness, to make it heir to a large estate and a fine house. We think that Mr. Morgan 'living to be one of the most respectable men in the parish of St. James's,' and Becky Sharpe keeping one of the most well-conducted stalls in Vanity Fair, are really far more edifying representations than any number of saints, pampered, very strangely to all readers of the New Testament, with all sorts of luxury, and any number of sinners consigned to a fate to which they certainly were not accustomed, when they were not plagued like other men, nor afflicted like other men,—when they had children at their desire, and left the rest of their substance to their babes.

We would recommend to all who think it necessary to warp facts in order to justify morality, the words of one of the greatest of English wits and poets:—

> Think we, like some weak prince, th' Eternal Cause
> Prone for his favourites to reverse his laws?
>
> . . . . . .
>
> 'If' sometimes virtue wants while vice is fed,
> What then? is the reward of virtue bread?
> That vice may merit, 'tis the price of toil,
> The knave deserves it when he tills the soil;

The knave deserves it when he tempts the main,
Where folly fights for kings, or dives for gain.

. . . . . .

What nothing earthly gives, or can destroy—
The soul's calm sunshine, and the heart-felt joy,—
Is virtue's prize: a better would you fix?
Then give humility a coach-and-six,
Justice a conqueror's sword, or Truth a gown,
Or public spirit its great cure—a crown.

In conclusion, we will indicate—it would require a book to do more—a few of the principal historical causes of the imperfect representations of life by novelists.

The most remarkable of these are traditional plots, the requisitions of which can hardly be complied with without a considerable warping of facts. The great majority of these plots are composed of two elements,—the adventurous, and the amatory.

The oldest European form of the adventurous element in novels, and its introduction into modern literature, has been curiously described by M. Guizot:—

Independently (he says) of the satisfaction which they afforded to morality and to human sensibility, the condition of which in the external world was so bad, the legends corresponded to other faculties and other necessities. We hear much in the present day of the interest, the movement, which in the course of what is vaguely called the middle ages, gave animation to common life. It seems as if great adventures, spectacles, and histories constantly excited the imagination; as if society were a thousand times more varied, more amusing, than it is with us. This might be the case with a few men who belonged to the higher classes, or were thrown into singular situations; but, for the mass of the population, life was, on the contrary, prodigiously monotonous, insipid, tiresome. It was destined to pass in one place, amidst the constant repetition of the same scenes. With hardly any external movement, and still less from within, it had as little pleasure as happiness, and the condition of its intelligence was not more agreeable than its material existence. There was no nourishment for the active imagination and love of adventure which have so much empire over men, except in the lives of the saints. To the Christians of this time—I may be allowed a merely literary comparison,—the legends were what the long stories, the brilliant and varied histories of which the *Thousand and One Nights* are a specimen, were to the Orientals. It was there that the popular imagination wandered freely in an unknown and wonderful world, full of action and poetry. It is difficult for us, at the present day, to share all the pleasure which they afforded twelve hundred years ago. Habits have changed, amusements besiege us; but we can at

least understand that this kind of literature derived hence a powerful interest.*

In the authors of the Legends of the Saints are probably to be found the literary ancestors of our modern novels of adventure; and possibly their miracles may have had some connexion with the habit of mind which leads so many novelists to suppose, or at least to suggest, that the divine government of the world is carried on entirely *ex machinâ*, and not by the orderly operation of general laws. It would of course be fanciful to rate very highly the influence of the legends on the writers of the present day. We merely refer to them as being the earliest instances of the operation of causes which are still in full vigour, and as having exercised some influence over those who were the earliest professors of the art of novel writing.

The commonest form of the combination of the adventurous and amatory element is pleasantly described by Mr. Thackeray:—

> I suppose, as long as novels last, and authors aim at interesting their public, there must be in a story a virtuous and gallant hero, a wicked monster his opposite, and a pretty girl who finds a champion. Bravery and virtue conquer beauty; and vice, after seeming to triumph through a certain number of pages, is sure to be discomfited in the last volume, when justice overtakes him, and honest folks come by their own. There never was, perhaps, a greatly popular story, but this simple plot was carried through it. Mere satiric wit is addressed to a class of readers and thinkers quite different to those simple souls who laugh and weep over a novel.

This description (although strangely inapplicable to the four most popular novels ever written—*Don Quixote, Pilgrim's Progress, Gil Blas,* and *Robinson Crusoe*), seems to us to characterise very happily a vast proportion of the plots of novels, which are often constructed in neglect of the principles which distinguish them from plays. A play is addressed to an audience, a novel to readers; therefore many deviations from nature are necessary in plays which are clumsy in novels. In a play, situations which form *tableaux,* surprises, mistaken identity, coincidences, and so forth, are unavoidable, because without their help the audience would not be able to take in the whole bearing of the piece, during its representation; but their improbability makes them displeasing in a novel, which presumes a certain amount of attention and leisure on the part of the reader.

If, indeed, a novel is merely an unacted play, like *Monte*

* *Civilisation en France,* Leçon 17me, p. 276, 277. Bruss. Edn. 1843.

Christo, its plot is good in proportion to the exactness with which dramatic principles are employed in its construction; but where it is professedly a picture of life, an incident borrowed from the stage is out of place. Take from *Monte Christo* the plots of Dantés and the Abbé, the discovery of the treasure, the intrigues against Dantés' enemies, and all the list of catastrophes at the end, and the book is not worth reading.

If, on the other hand, we take from *David Copperfield* the surprising recognitions of old acquaintance, the poetical justice, and the Magdalene and death-bed 'business' of Emily, Martha, and Dora, the reminiscences of the hero's youth and childhood, the sketch of the Yarmouth boatmen, and the gentleman who is always expecting 'something to turn up,' become sketches as exquisite in their playfulness and humour as anything in *Household Words*. It would be hard to give them higher praise.

It has always seemed to us that the confusion of the two classes of plots of which we have spoken, spoils all novels in which it exists. The wonderful superiority of Swift and Defoe over all succeeding novelists, is owing, to a great extent, to their almost absolute freedom from this fault. Grant Gulliver his postulates, and his book is as sober, dignified, and probable as Arthur Young's *Travels in France*. Smollett and Fielding have but very little of the dramatic element in their plots. *The Vicar of Wakefield* has a sort of sentimental, operatic atmosphere cast over it by Burcham's incognito, and Squire Thornhill's marriage. If Olivia's character had never been reinstated at all, the story would have been far more life-like.

Next to those of Swift and Defoe, we should most unquestionably place the plots of Fielding. They are marvellous in their simplicity and nature; and the various adventures by which they are illustrated form, as they would in real life, not the ground-work of the story told, but mere ornaments and episodes.

The whole story, for example, of *Joseph Andrews* may be told in a sentence: Joseph Andrews being dismissed from his place in London, goes into the country and marries Fanny Williams. The adventures related are merely incidental, and might all be struck out of the book without disarranging the continuity of the story. Most novels are, as it were, articulated by means of various more or less well-known dramatic contrivances.

Another curious case of an extrinsic disturbing force acting upon novels is to be found in the habit, which of late years has become so common, of using novels to ventilate opinions.

It is a common, but not, we think, a very fair objection to such books, to complain that the author does not give his critics a fair shot—that he shelters himself behind his hero, and expresses, not his own, but his puppets' opinions.

To those who consider authors as a sort of waste, over which they are entitled to common of abuse, some comfort may be given by the reflection, that by abusing the hero instead of the author, and by abusing him for those qualities which he shares with the author, they may still inflict a reasonable amount of pain; but those who are willing to consider that the object of such novels is rather to display the manner in which opinions act upon those who hold them, than to inculcate the opinions on their own grounds, will probably be content with considering how far the representation is honest.

Opinions and states of mind may, no doubt, be as legitimately made the subjects of representation as adventures, but the dangers of partiality, of dishonesty, of false morality on the part of authors, and of hasty misconception on the part of readers, is obviously at a maximum in this class of books. *Pendennis* is, perhaps, the most notable and trustworthy specimen of the class which could be mentioned. The irresolute, half-ashamed, sceptical hero, conscious of his own weakness, conscious of his own ignorance, conscious, too, of his capacity for both power and knowledge,—half envious of the vigorous delusions with which he sees one part of mankind possessed, half sympathizing with the vigorous pleasure-hunting of another class,—governed by tastes and circumstances instead of principles, but clinging, firm to old habits, to traditional lessons of truth and honour,—jotting down, sketch-book in hand, all the quaint irregularities or picturesque variations of the banks as he drifts, half-pleased, half-melancholy, down the river of life, not very bad, nor very good, nor very anything,—looking, half-respectfully, half-derisively, at what the world venerates,—despising, more or less, though on other grounds, what it hates,—is one of the saddest, as it is one of the most masterly memorials of the times in which he lived which any writer ever drew for posterity.

Our most remarkable writer of this kind, after Mr. Thackeray, appears to us to be, beyond all comparison, Mr. Kingsley. That he is a poet and a man of genius, that he has almost unrivalled power of description, and that he reproduces, with a fidelity almost marvellous, the feelings of that particular generation and class in which his lot is cast, no one, we think, who belongs to the same class and generation can doubt. The perplexities of Lancelot Smith, the certainties of Amyas Leigh —who is a Lancelot Smith without perplexities,—the opinions,

or rather sentiments of Alton Locke and his friend—who may be like tailors, but are most unquestionably like gentlemen accidentally reduced to that occupation,—are most undeniable likenesses of the genus Englishman, species Cantabrigian tempore 184-. Mr. Kingsley knows much more about Alexandria in the days of Cyril, and about England in the days of Elizabeth, than we do; therefore we shall only say that it is very curious that their inhabitants should have so exactly, so curiously, and intimately resembled that particular class to which we have referred, as, from Mr. Kingsley's novels, we find they did.

Novels are also made use of at the present day, as social or political *argumenta ad misericordiam*,—when they fall within the remarks which we have made upon novels written with a moral. Such, for example, are Mrs. Gaskell's novel of *Mary Barton*, written in order to bring forward certain observations of the author, and apparently to advocate a particular set of feelings respecting the condition of the poor in Manchester; and her novel of *Ruth*, written, apparently, to show that the regulations of society, with respect to female virtue, sometimes produce hardship. We have already expressed our opinion upon the general question of the introduction of morality into novels; historically considered, all these novels will have to be read with large allowances, on the score of their having been, to a great extent, party pamphlets. It is curious to observe how the artistic bias of the writer's mind gets the better of her theories. *Mary Barton* remains an excellent novel after its utter uselessness, politically speaking, is fully recognised. That poor people out of work in Manchester were very discontented and very miserable, and that being so, they behaved much as the authoress of *Mary Barton* describes their behaviour, will continue to be a fact worth representing, however notorious it may always have been, long after everybody has recognised the truth, that that fact has little or nothing to do with either the cause or the remedy of their wretchedness.

Ruth has much in it that is beautiful, even in the eyes of those who cannot see that if it were literally true it would prove anything at all. All that it shows is, that it is possible to put a case of a person who, for violating the letter, and not the spirit of the law, gets more severely punished than she would have been if the law had been made to provide for her individual case. This must be the case with all human laws. What has to be proved is that the punishments of the social law, on the subject to which *Ruth* refers, are too severe, when not only the letter, but the spirit also, of the law is violated. You do not prove that imprisonment is too severe a punish-

ment for theft by putting the case of a child being so punished, though it had hardly realised the notion of property: you must show that it is unjust to imprison a commonplace London pickpocket.

A person who reads either *Ruth* or *Mary Barton* without notice of the various social and political discussions which suggested these novels, will hardly be able to derive much experience from them. It is like reading *Caleb Williams* without knowing that Godwin was the author of *Political Justice*.

The personal character of the authors is the last disturbing force which is to be taken into account.

Life puts on very special colours when it is looked at through the medium of the feelings of a man like Swift, who seems to have been, in sober earnest, very much the kind of person that Byron wished himself to be thought. The *sæva indignatio* which prompted him constantly to write what, if not inscribed with, is continually suggestive of lamentations, and mourning, and woe—showed him all things in a sort of glare, which, like the light of some distant conflagration, forms a background to all the playfulness and irony of *Gulliver's Travels*, and becomes, at last, their one great characteristic; so that after being amused at Lilliput, interested in Brobdignag, and astonished at Laputa, we feel the same kind of relief on finishing the account of the Houyhnhms as we experience on passing into the open air and cheerful streets from the ulcers and abortions of a medical museum.

Goldsmith, on the other hand, saw everything *couleur de rose*. If young Primrose has to travel through Europe, he makes rather a pleasant business of it. He enjoys himself more, as he tells us, with his crown piece over a bowl of punch, than the old crimp to whom he has just paid its last companion with his fifty thousand pounds. When he lands on the continent he finds ways and means to see the world, not unpleasantly; he gets his board and lodging from 'those who are poor enough to be very merry,' and disputes his way cheerfully through university towns as yet unknown to tourists.

Now if anyone were to draw from Swift's book the moral that life was utterly foul and monstrous, or from Goldsmith the conclusion that even to a penniless vagabond it was a pleasant amusement,—he would be transferring to the picture the colour of the glass through which he looks at it. It would be a curious thing to construct a scale of the allowances necessary to be made in the books of different authors on this ground, like the rates of going which are ascertained for chronometers at the Greenwich Observatory.

We do not know a better corrective for timidity and despondence than the tone of 'unabashed' Defoe. Most men would have described Robinson Crusoe's career as something between life in a mad-house and life in gaol. So, too, Lockhart's *Life of Scott* is a not uninstructive commentary on the *Waverley Novels*. There is another side to that prosperous, easy-going enjoyment of life, and fine scenery, and middle-age costume, which is to be taken into account before we can let the stalwart heroes—who are constantly "accompanying their thanks with a kiss," and plausibly settling all the difficulties of the world,—walk out of the canvas into real life. All those volumes of correspondence about plate, linen, and furniture—all the adding house to house, and field to field—the final bankruptcy—the tragical and fruitless efforts which followed it—and the gradual breaking up of a great genius and an iron frame, are melancholy proofs that the world has more in it after all than is to be solved by the sort of boisterous, noisy, straightforward sense—sense in more ways than one—which the *Waverley Novels* seem to suggest as that sum of the whole matter which the Wise Man expressed somewhat differently.

In conclusion, we will take as an illustration of the manner in which the disturbing forces of which we have spoken may be minimized, an instance of a novel which appears to us to be, in these particulars, almost faultless; and which adds to the information and excites the feelings of its readers in a manner almost as natural and complete as if it were a real history of real facts. We allude to *Robinson Crusoe*.

Whichever of the tests we have been discussing is applied to this book, we shall find it equally sound. Consider it with reference to the variations from real life introduced into it for artistic purposes. It is almost impossible to point out a single such variation. There is no factitious completeness in the incidents or scenery; characters come and go, and are mentioned and criticised as they happen to affect Crusoe's career, but they are never brought in for any other purpose, nor are their separate adventures followed farther than the occasion requires. Sir Walter Scott remarked, very justly, that the elder brother, who was colonel of the regiment of German infantry, and the boy Xury, both vanish from the book just as they would have vanished from the history of a real man's life, and are not brought in at the end, as they would have been in any ordinary novel, to rejoice in the hero's fortunate catastrophe. One of Mr. Dickens's critics praised *Bleak House* because it was so like life, in containing such an infinite variety of characters. Compare *Bleak House* with

Robinson Crusoe. The old English gentleman—the eccentric bachelor, the surgeon, the heroine, Joe the sweeper, the law-writer, all the parties concerned in the Chancery suit, Mr. Jarndyce, the philanthropic lady, the attorney's clerk—who wants to make an offer of marriage 'without prejudice'—and fifty others, are all woven into one series of adventures, in which they are all interested, and from which, when they have performed their several tasks, they all depart in different dramatic positions, each with his appropriate piece of poetical justice. Can any one pretend that this is like life? Thousands of people affect us, and we affect thousands of others; but each of us works out the romance or history of our own life with but very occasional and fragmentary assistance from each other. Men are not, as Mr. Dickens seems to think, like characters in a play; they far more resemble a complicated set of forces, each acting in its own direction, and each influenced by, though independent of the others. In *Robinson Crusoe* this truth is far more fully apprehended. After the skipper of the Hull trader has been wrecked in Yarmouth Roads, and has given Crusoe some good advice, he goes on his way, and we see him no more. The old sailor who takes him a Guinea voyage dies when he returns. The Sallee rovers remain in the Mediterranean; the Portuguese captain and the Brazilian planters all stay at home; and when Crusoe wants them for a specific purpose, he has to go and look for them as any common person would. A modern novelist would have rolled them all into one mass; would have made the Portuguese captain marry the English captain's widow, who would have turned out to be connected with Friday, and to have a secret sorrow pressing on her on account of the bad behaviour of the colonel of Lockhart's foot, and the book would have closed with eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, according to the universal practice in that behalf.

If we examine Crusoe's character, we shall see that it is a simple ordinary character, in no respect distorted for the purposes of art. What a picture of a stern, swarthy youth, scowling or smiling in horrible sympathy at the winds and the waves, and displaying the most heroic courage when the oldest sailors quailed, would many modern authors have painted if they had had to draw Crusoe on his first voyage. Defoe simply represents him as 'most inexpressibly sick both in mind and body'—as making all sorts of good resolutions only to break them,—as cheering up and 'pumping as well as another,' when there was something actually to be done.

Is there any modern novelist who, wishing to represent a very brave, adventurous, young man, would have sufficient

confidence in himself to make him beat his breast, and sob and cry like a madman, trusting to his resources to prove that such conduct was a part of the bravest, hardiest, and most indomitable character that genius ever conceived? Defoe knew that courage is not a positive quality which some men have and others want; that it is that willingness to do disagreeable things which we have all acquired in some measure, but that there are acts of courage which the very bravest are only just able to do, and in which even they falter and tremble. How nobly is this brought out in Crusoe's behaviour on the island. At first he is in a passion of grief almost amounting to madness,—'but I thought that would do little good, so I began to make a raft,' &c. Little by little he calms down, often fairly giving way to the horrors of his situation, but always, after a time, setting to work manfully on whatever comes next to hand, until at last his mind grows into a state of settled content and cheerfulness, to which none but a man ribbed with triple steel would have attained. There is a fearless humility about the whole conception of Crusoe, of which we have almost lost even the tradition.

There is perhaps no novel which affords so little excuse for hasty generalisation on the part of readers. The admirable fidelity to nature with which the book is executed would prevent anyone from supposing that it represented a larger section of society than it really does represent; and the plan of the work affords constant hints of states of society quite unconnected with each other or with the main purpose of the book.

No one passion is invested with an exaggerated importance. Even Crusoe's love for wandering is made to arise principally out of his unsettled circumstances. It is not a bad test of the propriety with which passions are represented in a novel, to look upon the novel as an autobiography of the hero, and to consider what would be the feelings with which we should look upon a man who so described the events of his own life. If we apply this test to *Robinson Crusoe*, we shall see with what self-respect and consistency the story is told. First in order comes the serious business of his life—his trade, his travels, his management of his affairs in his island. Then come the principles upon which he lived, his reflections upon Providence, and the Divine plans of which he conceived himself to be the subject. His purely personal matters, his marriage, his wife's death, and the like, are modestly kept in the background, as matters which he had no particular wish to publish to the world at large.

Contrast this with David Copperfield's memoirs, 'which he never meant to have been published on any account.' If

David Copperfield had been a real man, we think his intention would have been eminently judicious. What would be thought of a real autobiography disclosing all a man's most secret thoughts and most sacred affections. It would be considered a great breach of decency: and why is this less an offence in a novel than it would be in real life? It is seldom wholesome to dwell upon descriptions of those thoughts and feelings in others which we should instinctively veil if they were our own.

It is observable that Defoe never worships his hero. He does not in the least degree warp facts, or allow them to be coloured by his own peculiarities. It is impossible to read the book without feeling that it is, to use a much-abused word, eminently objective; that is, the circumstances are drawn from a real study of things as they are, and not in order to exemplify the workings of a particular habit of mind.

With respect to the manner in which Defoe's work acts upon the feelings, a few very simple instances will be sufficient to show his superiority over modern pathos. On gay subjects he is gay, on pathetic subjects pathetic, but he never goes out of his way to look for affecting incidents or details. When he returns to England, after nearly forty years' absence, he simply says, 'I went down to Yorkshire to look for my relatives.' We are not even told whether he went on horseback or by coach, whom he met on the road by a series of surprising coincidences, how many shops had been rebuilt, or young people grown old.

When he has occasion to speak of his wife's death he does it simply and quietly. We are not told whether there were any, and what, reflections of the sun upon the wall on the occasion, nor what his wife wore, nor who told him of her death, nor what the angels had to say upon the subject, nor, indeed, anything but the essential facts and the eternal feelings—

> But in the middle of all this felicity one blow from Divine Providence unhinged me at once. This blow was the loss of my wife. She was, in a few words, the stay of all my affairs, the centre of all my enterprises, the engine that, by her prudence, reduced me to that happy compass I was in, and from the most extravagant and ruinous project that fluttered in my head as above, and did more to guide my rambling genius than a mother's tears and a father's instructions, a friend's counsel, or all my own reasoning powers could do. I was happy in being moved by her tears and in listening to her entreaties, and to the last degree desolate and disconsolate in the world by the loss of her. When she was gone, the world looked awkwardly round me.

As for his descriptions of nature, we give but one instance in illustration of our remarks on that subject:—

Accordingly, we set out from Pampeluna, with our guide, on the 15th of November; and, indeed, I was surprised, when, instead of going forward, he came directly back with us on the same road that we came from Madrid, about twenty miles, when, having passed two rivers, and come into the plain country, we found ourselves in a warm climate again, where the country was pleasant, and no snow to be seen; but on a sudden turning to his left, he approached the mountains another way; and though it is true the hills and precipices looked dreadful, yet he made so many turns, such meanders, and led us by such winding ways, that we insensibly passed the height of the mountains without being much incumbered with the snow; and, all of a sudden, he showed us the pleasant fruitful provinces of Languedoc and Gascony, all green and flourishing, though, indeed, at a great distance, and we had some rough way to pass still.

Perhaps the most extraordinary part of Defoe's book is its morality. The continual speculations upon the subject of Providence may seem, at first sight, to fall within the limits of that eagerness to justify existing notions which we have criticised. We apprehend, however, that this is not the case. All the incidents described are to the last degree simple, natural, and regular. The story is told so well, that the author can make the hero comment upon his own life as simply and quietly as if he were a real man commenting upon real occurrences. To invent facts in order to justify a theory is one thing,—to apply facts fairly represented in a particular manner is quite another thing. That a sailor should be cast upon a desert island, escape from it, and travel over the world afterwards, is not in itself improbable. That he should have the piety and good sense to make such observations upon it as Crusoe makes, is much to be desired.

A somewhat similar justification may be offered for his constant introduction of omens and presentiments. It is well known, from other quarters, that Defoe had a strong belief in the existence of such warnings. Believing in them as matters of fact, it is natural that he should introduce them into a picture of life; but it is remarkable that the omens are not very specific. He arranges the details of the facts as is most suitable to the story; and introduces considerable variations between the facts and the presentiments. He dreams, for example, that a savage will run into his wood, but he says, 'I did not let my dream come true in this, for I took him another way,' &c. A common writer would have made the details match exactly, in order to heighten the supernatural cha-

racter of the warning, but Defoe gives the impression of not going beyond experience and reason, even where his opinions of what experience and reason teach are most peculiar to himself.

The historical and personal disturbing forces to be allowed for in reading *Robinson Crusoe* are few. There is hardly anything conventional in the structure of the story. The book is written to serve no turn—moral, political, or religious. It might probably be inferred, from the general character of the religious speculations contained in it, that it had been written by a man to whom the Act of Toleration was the announcement of a new era, and who thought and felt upon those subjects as a contemporary of Locke would naturally think and feel.

We have already remarked that the charm of Crusoe's adventures is owing to the circumstance that they are described by a man who had, as he says, 'undergone as great risk as a grenadier on a counterscarp,' through a great part of his life, and who was by nature pre-eminently qualified to run such risks; and that, described by a man more dependent on society—by Fielding, for example—they would have been a series of awful calamities and miseries.

Taken as a whole, there is probably no book in the range of novel literature which would form an addition to the experience of its readers so nearly equivalent to that which it would have formed if it had been literally true. In so far as a novel is a poem, or a satire, or a play, or a depository for beauties, *Robinson Crusoe* has been surpassed again and again; but if a novel is properly and primarily a fictitious biography, and if we have fairly stated its general objects and effects, it is not only unsurpassed, but we may almost say unsurpassable.

It may perhaps be regretted that novels should form so large a part of the reading of young men, though it is doubtful whether in any case they are an unmixed evil. Those who idle over novels would, in their absence, idle over something else; those who are unnaturally excited by them would find a vent for that habit of mind elsewhere. But be they good or bad, useless or necessary, they circulate over the land in every possible form, and enter more or less into the education of almost every one who can read. They hold in solution a great deal of experience. It would therefore surely be a most useful thing to provide rules by which the experience might be precipitated, and to ascertain the processes by means of which the precipitate might be made fit for use. We are not so vain as to suppose that we have done much towards the accomplishment of such a task. We have done our best to point out the limits and directions of the instructions which are wanted.

F. S.

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF THE BRITISH NAVY.

'Il ne faut être maître de la mer que six heures pour que l'Angleterre cesse d'exister.'

THIS was the opinion of Napoleon I.; so essential to England did he consider the possession of a safe and effectual preponderance at sea.

The event was in our favour, and men are accustomed to consider the issue of events the best test of measures.

In war, however, success is not always to be considered a sufficient proof of a real and sufficient superiority. The chances of weather and of fortuitous rencontres at sea,—the presence, on one side or the other of an officer possessing rare and commanding ability,—with the numerous and incalculable circumstances which influence or neutralize combinations,—all these accidents contribute, ofttimes, in naval war, to bring about a success which men hasten to impute to the prowess of their own arms or the sagacity of their own precautions.

On the morning of the 19th of June, 1805, the *Curieux* brig met the fleet of Admiral Villeneuve in the middle of the Atlantic. The meeting was entirely accidental, for the brig was simply making the best of her way home with despatches, and this chance encounter in all probability saved England from invasion. The fortunate little cruiser hastened home with her important tidings. On the 22nd of July, Admiral Calder, having been reinforced, was enabled to give Villeneuve an effective check: before the end of August the army of Boulogne was on its way to Germany, and the expedition to England was 'indefinitely postponed.'

Such are the accidents upon which the issue of war, but especially of a naval war, may depend.

It is obviously unwise to conclude that such contingencies will always befriend us, and at this time no one will be inclined to assume that we shall always have a Nelson or a Collingwood to turn such chances to account.

We are, however, accustomed to suppose that in the last war our wooden walls proved themselves a sufficient bulwark for our island,—and with this opinion we are not now inclined to quarrel. The great invasion question is one which, at this moment, we are not anxious to discuss, and in the general operations of war it is certain that the British navy had won the respect and admiration of the world.

In foreign works on naval matters, the usage of the British fleet is cited as the highest authority; officers of foreign navies have crowded into our service, eager to serve an apprenticeship under our flag; the most flattering history we possess of our naval exploits is from the pen of an able and patriotic French officer, and the proverb that an Englishman is born a sailor, as a Frenchman is born a soldier, has become trite in Europe.

The belief in the prowess of British sailors was unlimited. One unprecedented achievement succeeding another had taught the world to conclude that the British fleet was certain to effect all that was possible for men, and perhaps a little more. No enterprise was considered too hazardous for their daring, or too arduous for the endless resources and energy of British sailors. Wherever our flag appeared, our boldest enemies were cowed and daunted by the certainty of a prompt and resolute attack, and they commenced action with the disheartening prospect of inevitable defeat.

It was of a British naval officer that Napoleon spoke when he bitterly complained that he had marred his destiny. It was a British Admiral who checkmated the Indian expedition at Aboukir. It was the same officer who dared to quit the Mediterranean with ten ships in pursuit of eighteen, and crossing the Atlantic twice without a day's rest, chased the panic-struck squadron of Villeneuve before him, and bought with his own life that bloody victory which destroyed the last hope of invasion.

In all his most prodigious designs Napoleon found himself arrested by the insurmountable obstacle which a superior navy, and fleets more daring and more ably managed than his own presented; and thus it was that the government which disposed absolutely of Spain and Holland, which held the Continent in mute obedience, extending its dominions from the Rhine to the Adriatic—that government, paralysed by the disorganization of its fleets, was destined to continue powerless to the last against the only enemy who still stood unconquered before it.*

* *La Graviere*, translated by Captain Plunket, pp. 3, 4.

Such are the opinions of La Graviere, and such was the prestige won for us by our old sailing ships and by our old fighting captains, who learned their trade at sea in the school of Jervis, and Collingwood, and Nelson.

It is difficult to estimate the practical value of such a prestige as this, to calculate what weight it gave to our counsels in negotiation, what influence it had in the formation and dislocation of alliances, or how far our commercial prosperity has been promoted by the ascendency of our military marine.

Never, perhaps, did our own confidence in our naval resources stand higher than at the commencement of the present war. The naval service was in high favour,—experimental squadrons and naval displays had kept alive the national interest in maritime matters. The qualities of ships, the claims of rival marine architects, and other professional topics were discussed with eagerness in society and in the press, and the narratives of our naval exploits in China and Borneo were amongst the most popular volumes of the day.

The great naval review at Spithead was fresh in the memory of all. Thousands had thronged from far and near to see the wooden walls of Old England in their splendour. Throughout the towns of Ryde and Portsmouth every dwelling was crowded. On the expected day every hill, every spot of projecting land was thronged with country people who had walked through the night to witness the show. All shops were closed, all business postponed. A week's wages were paid for a place in a wherry, or a footing on a pier. Two Prussian frigates contributed by their presence and the roar of their guns to the magnificence of the display. The sea presented such a spectacle as only England could show. From Southsea Common to the Owers' Sand the wide sea shone with sails. More than three hundred yachts spread their white wings and followed in the wake of their sovereign, and every available boat, barge, or skiff,—the most unwieldy collier and the tiniest shrimping craft,—were pressed into service for the occasion.—So popular was the navy, so proud were we of our noble ships, the very names of which suggested glorious memories, and had become historical in the annals of Europe.

On the approach of war, whatever misgivings we may have had on other subjects, in our fleet, at all events, our confidence was unbounded. 'I believe in the wooden walls of Old England,' was one of the unwritten articles in the creed of every Englishman, and we anticipated with eagerness the repetition of such deeds of naval daring as our grandfathers

were wont to tell us by the fireside in the old Christmas evenings at home.

Every circumstance contributed to raise this expectation to the utmost. The great and difficult question of steam power, as applied to war, was solved by the invention of the screw. And now we saw with wonder a huge line-of-battle ship, complete in her batteries, perfect in her masts and rigging, wending her way among the shipping and shoals of Portsmouth harbour with all the ease and address, and thrice the speed of a waterman's skiff.

The reports which reached us of the perfect harmony which reigned between the allied squadrons in Besica Bay, served also to encourage the brightest hopes. What would prove too arduous for the generous rivalry of French and English to undertake, or for so powerful a combination to achieve?

But it was on the departure of the Baltic fleet that our hopes were raised to the highest pitch. An admiral was appointed to the command whose very name was ominous of prompt and decisive measures,—an officer who, though, perhaps, not altogether appreciated in the service, had contrived to command no common share of popular favour and attention. Bold and eccentric in demeanour, and a fearless denouncer of abuses, he was looked upon as one who would fight prudently and judiciously, if possible,—but who, at all events, would fight.

As regards the crews, also, the forebodings of the alarmists were not verified; sailors had come forward with alacrity,—not, perhaps, exactly such sailors as we could wish, but still they were 'British mariners,' and they would improve; while the ships were the very *élite* of our navy,—the unrivalled *Duke of Wellington*, the dashing *St. Jean d'Acre*, the brilliant *Princess Royal*, the *Nile*, the *Arrogant*, and her sister frigates, more than a match for a line-of-battle ship of olden times,—these noble ships, excellent under steam, unrivalled under sail, and armed with the heaviest and most destructive ordnance, excited wherever they appeared the wonder and admiration of every seaman. Danes, Swedes, and Germans crowded to gaze at the magnificent vessels as they lay in Kiöge Bay and the roadstead at Elfsnabben. What could not be done with a force so tremendous and yet so active—so manageable? We who had done so much with our old clumsy sailing ships, what could we not do with such ships and such officers? For never were there such spirited and uncompromising admirals. 'Burn, sink, and destroy,' was the motto in the Euxine; 'Lads, sharpen your cutlasses,' the signal in the Baltic.

Two years have passed, and it must be confessed that our

fleets have not yet fulfilled our hopes. No longer ambiguous voices, but distinct statements couched in words that burn have gone forth to the world, that the British navy has failed—not in numbers, not in skill, but in dash, in enterprise, in *élan;* euphemistic expressions, under which we seek to shroud a humiliating idea.

It is not in the hardy pluck of the sailor that we have failed—he will still go anywhere, and do anything; nor in the native courage of the English gentleman, which no inaction can undermine; but it is in the higher courage which dares to command, to conceive, and decide on a fearless enterprise,—to organise a bold and energetic system,—to incur loss and damage in order to secure a victory,—to brave humiliation and censure in case of defeat.

We will not be so hasty or so unjust as to conclude that this startling imputation can be true; our expectations may have been overwrought,—the means supplied have, perhaps, been inadequate, or possibly secret instructions may have tied the hands and damped the spirit of our admirals.

That such an imputation should have the shadow of a foundation to rest on for a moment, is a disgrace to the service and a calamity to the country.

It is just to admit that, since this war began, our ships have never really had a fair chance. Show us, it is said, a fleet or a ship, and we will fight and conquer; but do not expect us to knock our heads against stone walls. Ships are not built to fight stone walls, and never did, and never can, fight them with advantage. And then a host of instances is produced of encounters in which ships, as it is said, have always been defeated by batteries.

In the present war, we are assured, nothing is done, because the enemy has done all for us. The sea is clear of hostile ships; no Russian flag is hoisted, from Kamschatka to the Cape; the very seas of the Czar—his private preserves, the Baltic and the Euxine—are blocked and guarded by the allies. His trade is annihilated,—his navy held up to contempt; our men of war, transports, storeships, and defenceless colliers, carry troops, provisions, and munitions over the waves where the Russian flag was paramount.

In the last war, we had enemies who met us face to face, ship to ship, and fleet to fleet. The Dutch at Camperdown, the French repeatedly, and the Spaniards at St. Vincent and Trafalgar, braved our squadrons in open sea, and gave us a fair tussle for the victory. But with our present foe it is otherwise. With judgment, founded, doubtless, on the soundest reasons, and with a pertinacity which no taunts can provoke,

he resolutely lurks behind his batteries, and doggedly scuttles or burns his best ships, rather than give us a chance of a victory; and as for those confounded batteries of his, you may depend upon it, it is best to leave them alone. Nelson, they declare, never forced his way into Brest or Rochfort; why are we called upon to risk our beautiful ships at Sveaborg or Cronstadt?

It is true that Nelson did not attack the French in their fortresses, because they gave him plenty to do at sea. If, however, our enemies in Nelson's time had abandoned the open sea, and bolted like rabbits into their holes, it is difficult to believe that he would not have found means to ferret them out, —that he would not have made the attempt,—or that attempting and succeeding, he would have failed to follow up his success. In fact, a similar case actually did occur at Copenhagen. The Danes, in 1801, unable to encounter the British fleet with any prospect of success, kept their ships under the guns of their forts, and did their best to defend them with earthworks, floating batteries, rafts, gunboats, and all the means at their command. Copenhagen was, at that time, the strongest place in the north, and is approached by narrow and difficult channels among shoals of the greatest intricacy. Nelson, however, did not hesitate. With such means as he possessed, he made the attempt, showing, as usual, the most consummate seamanship in the plan of attack, and the utmost resolution in carrying it out, and it is needless to add that he succeeded.

Algiers is a similar instance. This also was a place of great strength. So far back as 1618, Sir William Monson had pronounced it impregnable; and in 1620 an attempt, made by Sir Robert Mansel, received a disgraceful defeat. The Emperor Charles V., the French, and the Spaniards, had all, at different times, attempted to reduce this formidable stronghold, but without success. Nevertheless, Lord Exmouth, aided by a small Dutch squadron, took his sailing ships boldly in, and anchoring the *Queen Charlotte* within hail of the mole, opened a fire, which continued six hours, destroying eleven ships of war, thirty gunboats, a vast amount of stores, and reducing the greater part of the batteries to ruins.

We are told by modern tacticians, that the success of the fleet was due to the mistake of the enemy in allowing ships to approach and anchor at close quarters with impunity. It is clear, however, that no admiral could have calculated on such forbearance; and yet Lord Exmouth, a pretty good judge, did not hesitate to make the attempt. The same remark applies to the actions at Acre and at Navarino; and

if we are to assume that our enemies will never make a blunder, but will, on every occasion, do exactly what they ought, we assume that which experience of the past certainly does not warrant, either on their part or our own. It seems also, that energetic measures have a remarkable tendency to develop blunders on the part of an adversary, while a timid and inactive policy is usually productive of mistakes and inefficiency on the side of those who pursue it. However, instances of combats between ships and batteries in times past must in fairness be ruled entirely out of court. Ships are no longer subject to the same conditions, nor liable to the same contingencies. Their excellence no longer depends upon the same qualities in their officers and men, or at all events, not in the same degree.

A line-of-battle ship in old times was, of course, immovable and helpless in a calm; whereas, in the season which is most favourable for warlike operations, calms are frequent, and the strength and constancy of the wind can never be relied on. On the other hand, in gales and strong winds, her batteries are rendered ineffective by the motion of the ship; even in fine weather, if the wind is fair for approaching forts, it probably blows from the sea, and will usually cause swell enough to interfere much with the accuracy of a ship's practice. With such a wind, the vessel may certainly approach with ease; but if the waters are narrow, she must approach slowly, from the impossibility of stopping her at speed. All this time her hull, her sails, rigging, spars, and people are exposed to a raking fire; heavy blocks, huge splintered spars, and ropes rattle about the ears of the men at quarters; perhaps sails fall over the side, and mask the guns or take fire from their discharge; and to crown the whole, with such a wind it is next to impossible for a shattered ship to get out of action. There she must stay till she silences her opponents or sinks. But, if her position is perilous under such circumstances, it is scarcely better if the wind should blow from the shore to the sea. The ship will then have the advantage of smooth water, and her retreat will be facilitated; but a square-rigged ship can sail no nearer the wind than six points, or an angle of 67° 30′ from her true course. If the fort be placed in a bay or an estuary, the ship can only advance by tacking in a zig-zag course towards her object; under such circumstances, the risk of running ashore, from eddies of stream, baffling winds, and injury to her rigging is very great; and every time the ship tacks, she becomes a helpless mark to a destructive raking fire.

It will easily be seen, that such enterprises as these were attended with the greatest difficulty, that the best possible

measures might be baffled at any moment by a casualty against which no foresight could provide; and that, without consummate address in handling such unwieldy machines the service was truly desperate.

For manœuvring in narrow water and dealing with land batteries, the ships of Nelson and Exmouth cannot be compared to those of the present day.

No logical conclusion can be drawn from the one to the other; they are perfectly different implements. It is common to compare a sailing ship to a horse, and a steam ship to a locomotive engine. The comparison is inapposite. The steam ship possesses the superiority of both—the speed and precision of the one, and the activity and cleverness of the other. On the contrary, a sailing line-of-battle ship in narrow waters is as much out of her element as a locomotive in a turnip field, or a hunter on the rails.

Let us take an instance. At Algesiras—

The wind being very light on the 6th, the admiral was drifted out of sight of the *Superb*, *Thames*, and *Pasley;* thus he lost the services of a seventy-four, a frigate, and a brig to begin with. The next morning the enemy's squadron, consisting of three line-of-battle ships and a frigate, is descried moored close to the shore; and, protected by some gun-boats and batteries. At 7.50 the battery on Cabrita Point fired on the *Pompée*, then running in with a fine breeze; while the *Venerable*, from the partiality of the wind, lay becalmed, the *Cæsar* and two remaining ships were a long distance astern, striving hard to get up. A little before 9 the *Audacious*, and shortly after the *Venerable*, dropped their anchors.* The *Hannibal* and *Spencer* being becalmed to leeward of the *Cæsar*, their signals were made to tow into action.

On a breeze springing up, Captain Ferris eagerly availed himself of it, by making sail towards the orange grove, tacking in shore and keeping a close luff, in the hope of laying the French Admiral on board on the side next the shore. This daring attempt was frustrated by his ship taking the ground immediately abreast of the battery of San Iago.

Until this period the advantage seemed entirely on the side of the British squadron; but by a flaw of wind the *Pompée* broke her sheer, and instead of raking the French Admiral, was raked by him with most destructive effect.

She was obliged to cut her cable, and was towed off by the boats. The ships remained here for nearly two hours, under every disadvantage of calm, light and baffling airs, with their heads all round the compass; the boats were incessantly employed in

* *Battles of the British Navy.* Allen, R.N.

towing them, so as to bring their broadsides to bear, till called away to assist the *Hannibal*, now immovably fixed on the shoal, whence no effort could extricate her.*

Here we have the failure of ships attacking vessels at anchor, and batteries, clearly brought about by causes which took effect with sailing ships, and would not have taken effect with those propelled by steam.

Again, at Copenhagen, had Nelson possessed a steam squadron, the *Bellona* and *Russell* might still have taken the ground, but the tough old *Agamemnon* would not have been compelled to remain at anchor out of gunshot, and the *Veteran*, *Ramillies*, and *Defence*, detached by the Admiral but delayed by the wind, would have come promptly into action. Here, again, the difficulties of a perilous enterprise would have been reduced and modified by steam. In fact, the accession of steam power entirely alters the relative strength of ships and batteries; whatever the value of ships was formerly, it is now multiplied indefinitely, the only limit being the number of ships present, and the space for them to float in.

Up to the present time we have had positively no practical test, on a large scale, of the power of a steam squadron as opposed to batteries; and our tacticians will go on arguing about bygone and irrelevant instances, till the issue of some bold and well-planned exploit shall confirm or silence for ever their melancholy forebodings.

The affair before Sebastopol, so often appealed to, has in reality no bearing whatever upon the question. In a dead calm a squadron of sailing ships attempted to attack forts of great strength,—some on the water's edge, others at considerable elevation. With the exception of the two ships which had auxiliary steam, the others were tugged into action by steamers lashed alongside; thus it took more than an hour to get the *Britannia's* head round. The ships went crawling into action, one or two at a time. The greater part of the squadron did not get into available distance at all; one or two ships were for a long time almost unsupported; and, in fact, the necessary conditions for success were never fulfilled. For ships to succeed against batteries, they must possess a great preponderance of fire, and must act at close quarters;—at Sebastopol it was not so.

The superiority of batteries is their comparative invulnerability; the superiority of ships is that, though vulnerable, they are locomotive. An overpowering fire may be brought to bear upon one point, and when they are at a disadvantage

* *Brenton*, ii. 547.

they can retire. An officer who engages batteries without a superiority of fire, or who, from a point of honour, remains under fire of batteries when overmatched, forfeits the peculiar and only advantages which his ships possess; and as a necessary consequence of the greater vulnerability of his material, gets the worst of the encounter. At Bomarsund, again, the ships employed were frigates and corvettes, for the block-ships were so distant that they may be left out of consideration. The frigates were too distant for broadside firing; in fact, no heavy cannonade was maintained, but each ship fired one or two guns a minute; consequently, the number of vessels present had little beneficial effect, except by distracting the enemy's fire. Nevertheless, the fortress was much injured, and the ships were untouched. A celebrated tactician is wrong in supposing that the forts were breached by the land attack. One fort, an outlying tower, known as Fort Nottich, was breached, and this one creditable feature in the affair was due to the marines and blue-jackets of the fleet.

The same high authority is also in error when he supposes that the French vertical shell-firing had great effect upon the fort. The vertical shell-firing alluded to was aimed at another outlying tower, termed Fort Tzee, and doubtless the practice was very good; but as to its never missing, the person who supplied that information doubtless mistook field-pieces for mortars, and round-shot for shell. Conclusions founded upon such instances as these—one of which has no bearing upon the question, and the other has been imperfectly understood,—can have no weight whatever, and all the warnings and predictions which follow must be considered so far as mere melancholy and ill-omened speculations.

In referring to the disadvantages of ships on the old system, allusion has already been made to the greater capabilities of the new; but they should be stated more explicitly. Besides the power of moving without reference to wind, a ship has acquired other and still greater facilities. The power to turn astern enables her to thread the most intricate channels, and to turn in her own length. Again, it was maintained in old times that ships would prove irresistible could they be placed suddenly, and at once, within close quarters of a battery: it was in the slow and uncertain approach that the danger and difficulty consisted. By steam this difficulty is modified, if not removed. If circumstances have enabled an officer to make himself master of the soundings, his ship may advance at speed till she reaches the very position she intends to occupy. The lofty spars and complicated intricacies of ropes, blocks, and gear of every sort, are a

great source of danger, and an admirable mark for the guns of the enemy. All this in a steamer is unnecessary, and should be removed before she attacks a fort. Top-masts (if possible), topgallant-masts, and the whole generation of yards, with the appurtenance thereof, should be consigned to the care of some non-combatant transport, or stowed away as convenience may suggest; and the fighting ships should go in stripped and unencumbered, like boxers to the scratch.

It was not without surprise that we saw at Bomarsund the tall spars of our frigates towering above rocks and trees, and above the sheet of smoke which wrapped their hulls and lower masts. The same thing has occurred in the Black Sea. In a despatch, dated I believe from Kaffa, the officer remarks that the spars of the ships betrayed their position to the enemy, while the forts were entirely invisible to the ships.

At Sveaborg, the *Hastings*, *Cornwallis*, and *Amphion*, detached, to make a diversion at Sandhamn, very wisely sent down topgallant-masts and yards, but the custom of the service is otherwise.

Such considerations as these had suggested themselves to the minds of those who took deep interest in the prospects of the British navy; and it was not without pride and exultation that they perceived the progress of improvements and the introduction of steam tending to render ships more effective, and consequently a maritime power more formidable than ever; and men looked with eagerness to the present war to display and develop to the utmost this new and prolific source of strength and energy to the already strong and energetic navy of England.

So far the gain seems all on the side of the ships; but other circumstances have been supposed to tend more or less in the opposite direction. In the first place, it was considered that steam would render a ship more vulnerable than ever. Ludicrous pictures were drawn for us of an unhappy steamer with a shell in her boiler, and her wheels shot away. These difficulties have been obviated by the invention of the screw propeller; the cumbrous and unsightly paddle-boxes are gone for ever. The war-steamer, hitherto a humpbacked, ungainly black-beetle, now comes out once more a ship, and something like a ship. The *Duke*, the *St. Jean d'Acre*, the *Euryalus*, and the *Arrow*, are the most graceful craft of their respective classes that ever floated on the sea; and the engine has found a resting-place where nothing but vertical firing can invade its precincts. On the whole, if we compare the disabling accidents to which a sailing ship and a steam ship are exposed in action, the balance will be found to be largely in favour of steam.

In the construction of shore batteries, no very great improvements have been made. Earthworks and turf slopes are no doubt very formidable foes. As opposed to ships, they are far more impregnable than the vaunted triple tiers of granite, about which we have heard so much. It seems impossible that any perpendicular building that shows face to the front can withstand the terrific pounding of a squadron of line-of-battle ships, hurling broadsides at short range; but shot and shell fall upon these yielding slopes as harmless as the Trojan swords upon the harpies' feathers. Still, this is no new difficulty. Turf slopes and batteries of earth have no novelty in them; we have had them for years, and there is scarcely a fortified town which is not defended more or less on this principle. In offensive material, however, the case is different. The general use of shells and red-hot shot, and the introduction of chambered ordnance, firing enormous hollow shot, are changes which tell heavily against shipping, and have little effect on batteries.

As regards vertical shell-firing, ships still have, and probably will continue to have, a great advantage. A ship or mortar-boat is so small an object, that at 4000 yards the chance of hitting her with a projectile fired at an elevation of forty-five degrees, is very small. On the other hand, a fort that can contain a garrison must afford a fair and sufficient mark. It is, however, from horizontal shell-firing that a ship has most to fear: such a cannonade is truly frightful to witness. The blaze and din of the explosions, in addition to the roar of the guns,—the horrid singing of splinters overhead,—and the destructive appearance of a bursting shell as it rushes through the rigging with a roar like a blast from Tartarus,—are well calculated to shake the nerves of inexperienced persons. If a shell bursts on board, or if it lodges in the ship's side before it bursts, its ravages must be awful; but it must be remembered that at short range a shell usually passes through a ship like a round-shot, without bursting, or explodes harmlessly before it reaches her. The difficulty of timing the fusee with such extreme nicety is almost insurmountable.

We have seen at Bomarsund the *Amphion* and *Phlegethon* exposed at twelve hundred yards to horizontal shell-fire, from the principal fort, for three quarters of an hour. The Russians used time fusees, which burned with tolerable accuracy. At a distance it seemed that the ships' rigging must be torn to pieces, and their people killed wholesale, but not a man was injured, and I believe not a rope cut.

Red-hot shot were not generally used in the last war, and they also have their horrors. Close quarters I believe to be

antidotes to these poisonous pills. If a shot passes through both sides of a ship into the sea it has no time to raise a fire, and may as well be cold as hot; and it remains to be seen whether some chemical means cannot be contrived of extinguishing the fire caused by red-hot shot. At present they are certainly most unwelcome visitors, and their appearance, as they come glittering along by night, is not prepossessing.*

Chambered guns are cannon of very large bore, and comparatively lighter metal: the chamber for the reception of the powder is a cylindrical or conical hollow towards the breech, considerably smaller than the bore. The after part of these guns is also thicker in proportion than the chase or barrel; and the shot which they throw, being hollow, is of course lighter than solid shot of equal diameter.

By these means guns of moderate weight are enabled to throw shot of enormous dimensions, which are calculated to make a fearful chasm in the side of a ship, while against stone batteries hollow shot generally break in pieces, and are comparatively harmless.

These guns have, however, some defects: they cannot be double-shotted with advantage; their range is not so great as that of long guns; their recoil is very great, and they require more elevation.

After about half-an-hour's brisk firing on board a corvette armed with 8-inch guns I observed that the splices of the breechings began to draw, and the shot appeared to drop considerably.†

In balancing the gain and loss of a power chiefly maritime by these recent changes, the preponderance will be found to be entirely in favour of the ship. It is only in one branch of her numerous employments that the improvements in artillery affect her unfavourably; whereas in cruising, blockading, convoying, covering or assailing troops,—in contending with gales and the ordinary perils of the sea, her strength is increased threefold.

And it must not be supposed that the introduction of steam power is the only improvement we have achieved. Our steam ships are perfect sailers. It is often said, with some measure of truth, that the last sailing man-of-war has been launched,

---

* I am informed by a French officer who was on board the *Mogador* at Odessa, that they found no difficulty in quenching the red-hot shot which lodged in the ship's sides by the ordinary fire-pumps. The 'Fire-annihilator' is, at all events, worth a trial.

† Chambered guns are spoken of according to the diameter of the bore, as 8-inch or 10-inch guns. Long guns which fire solid shot are described by the weight of the shot which they throw,—as 32-pounders, 68-pounders, &c.

so also it is devoutly to be hoped that, except for tugs, gun-boats, &c., we shall never see another man-of-war steamboat.

The combination of the two principles in a manner that gives us at the same time a better steamer than we ever had before and a better sailer than Nelson ever dreamed of, is the triumph of the day.

A sailing ship of the new school has been known to make 17 knots, or 19¼ statute miles for hours together, a speed which few of our fastest steamers have ever attained, and which is gained without expenditure of material or delay for replenishing. Still there is ample room for improvement. Old theories of naval architecture still haunt our dockyards, and we are far from having reached the limit of perfection in ship-building.

These immense advances in the construction and motive power of our ships have doubtless vastly increased the force and raised the position of Great Britain, while she continues to hold the maritime superiority, and knows how to employ it. If there was strength in our alliance formerly, there should now be double security, if we chastised our enemies with whips in olden time, we ought to chastise them with scorpions now.

Much, however, as ships have gained in activity, batteries have gained scarcely less in artillery. The old quarrel between these inveterate enemies is still undecided, and I suppose we must leave them to fight it out.

It will be plain, however, that if a fleet is to fight at all, its best chance of success is in the boldest measures. An admiral may be justified in leading the largest force he can muster either stealthily by night or boldly by day, to engage batteries at the closest possible quarters. It is a heavy stake to play for, but it is the game. On the other hand, to send a few steamers to cannonade forts at 1000 yards is clearly a false move,—illogical and wrong. Inconclusive it will always be, and if the enemy knows how to use his guns, it must be disastrous. It may be a little disaster, but it will be a great disgrace.

If our enemy venture to place his fleet or his property in a position where we can come to close quarters, our modern ships should not be deterred by batteries from assailing them; and if he puts them out of the reach of our men-of-war, we must try other means to get at them. And such means are supplied to us by our great and faithful auxiliary—steam.

The Northern powers have long been strong in gun-boats, a class of vessels which till now have never occupied much space in our navy list. The coasts of the Baltic Sea are peculiar. The shores of the Baltic do not consist, like our own, of lofty cliffs or sloping sands, which shut the sea within definite limits which he cannot pass, but a monotonous archi-

pelago of barren or pine-clad islands with few intervals along the western shore, from Carlskrona to Tornea, fringe this dreary and desolate sea. Among these rocky isles are numerous channels, along which country boats ply with firewood or village goods to the markets of Stockholm or Norrköping. Here, as in all rocky seas, the water is deep, but beset with numerous reefs and hidden dangers. The same description will apply nearly to the Gulf of Finland, and in a less degree to the Kattegat.

Few ships would have the hardihood to venture into so perilous a labyrinth, and in old times these sheltered bays and fiords afforded safe hiding-places to the numerous gun-boats which were ever ready to pounce upon an unhappy trader, dozing listlessly in the calm of a summer's day, or occasionally assembling in packs, they would sally out to worry and torment even a frigate or line-of-battle ship deserted by the breeze.

These craft have done good service in past times in the navies of Russia, Denmark, and Sweden. Since the days of steam, however, they are out of date, as an offensive arm their occupation is gone; but it has been the wise policy of the British Admiralty to introduce in their place a new class of steam gun-boats, which promise to form a most useful and formidable branch of our naval service.

These vessels are rakish little screw steamers about 100 feet in length and from 16 to 20 wide; their tonnage somewhat exceeds 200, their draught of water 6½; they are propelled by two high-pressure engines of 30-horse power, and they carry two of the largest guns in the British service. They can make about nine knots, under steam, and they have three raking masts on which they can hoist lug-sails in case of need. They are painted a dingy lead colour, and they have a most warlike and waspish aspect.

In the present summer such vessels were for the first time employed in the Baltic, and they answered their purpose well. Being extremely manageable, they fight under way and at considerable speed. Dashing in at full power, they blaze away with their huge 68-pounder, and then wheeling round, give the enemy a dose from their broadside-gun as they retire to load; or else, five or six together, they spin round in a kind of witches' dance, each firing a salvo as her guns bear upon the foe. At the pace they go they certainly are difficult objects to hit; at night they are almost invisible, and but for their high-pressure engines might be inaudible too. They are, unfortunately, unable to carry much fuel, and consequently can never be trusted far from their supplies; but for desultory operations against towns or small coast batteries, for excursions up rivers

and bays in search of ships, for covering or opposing the landing of armies, their services are invaluable. This great maritime country, by prodigious efforts, contrived to send sixteen such vessels to the Baltic, the French had fifteen,* and the Czar, to our shame, had mustered thirty-six at Cronstadt.

The means of destruction at the command of an admiral are not confined within these limits: he has at his disposal fire-ships and mortar-vessels.

The former, for some reason, have not yet been employed in this war; nor has steam as yet been applied, as without doubt it might be, to render them as sure and effective, in fact, as they always were formidable and terrific in appearance.

Mortar-boats, or, as we used to call them, bomb-ships, are by no means a novel implement in naval war, but attention has recently been much directed to them, on account of the signal success with which they were employed at Sveaborg. Indeed, from the inflated narratives in the newspapers, one would suppose that a 13-inch mortar was an entirely new machine, that a mortar-boat was the novel and ingenious creation of the gifted men who now wield the destinies of our navy. Both, however, were employed in the siege of Copenhagen, and the 13-inch mortar has for many years appeared in our lists of sea-service ordnance. There was no mystery or secret about mortars; the only secret and mystery is, why in the name of eternal tardiness and stupidity, they were not sent long ago, and why at last sixty were not sent instead of sixteen.

A 13-inch shell, when loaded, weighs 201lbs; it mounts to an elevation of nearly a mile, and falls with a shock of 60 tons. Our present mortar-boats are very defective. They are sailing vessels, bearing a strong affinity to an ordinary Humber keel or Billy-boy—very ugly, and very slow. This, perhaps, is not very material, but the mortar, which weighs five tons, instead of resting on a solid platform in the hold of the ship, with shifting hatches to fire through, is placed on deck. This causes the vessel to roll at sea in the most frightful manner, placing mast, mortar, and men in imminent danger of being hove overboard by the violent and intolerable motion.

However, while they were engaged, they fortunately had the finest weather. Under such circumstances, anything will do to fight a mortar,—a rock, a raft, or a country boat, may be fitted in twenty-four hours with a platform, which will endure as long as the mortar which it is destined to carry.

Such, then, were the elements of which our Baltic fleet was composed: vessels of every description, and available for every

* Many of these did not reach the Baltic in time for active operations.

sort of service, we possessed; science had done her work nobly for us; in quality our force was excellent; and, if it failed in quantity, it was a disgrace to our authorities; if they lacked materials, they had but to ask and to receive.

The comparative inactivity of our fleet must be traced to other sources; and it is not without reluctance that we are led to the conviction that the *personnel* of our navy has been found in some measure unequal to the occasion.

In venturing upon such a startling assertion, we bring no imputation upon our sailors,—they are, I believe, the best in the world: still less upon our officers: but definite causes have produced their natural results. The sea service is in a state of transition. Men educated in one system, especially old men, do not very readily accommodate their thoughts and modes of action to an altered state of things; and unless some commanding intellect appear among us—some officer of the St. Vincent breed, with force of character to organize and to command, we must wait till the old generation has passed away, and younger and more pliant minds have taken their place, before we shall have what England requires—an active and efficient marine.

It will not now do to arrogate to ourselves any great excess of natural courage over other nations, and yet our old navy surpassed all others in daring and resolution.

The courage of a seaman, whether he be admiral or A.B., depends in no small degree upon his skill, his confidence in the ship that bears him, and in his own power to handle her, —in other words, upon his seamanship. In seamanship our sailors of the old school were unrivalled; in the *coup d'œil* to see in an instant the thing to be done, and the way to do it,—in the foresight and method, the offspring of experience, which never permitted them to be surprised by an emergency,—in the abundance of resources which found a key to every difficulty, a sword for every knot;—in such qualities they surpassed all others, and were masters of their profession. Nelson and Collingwood at St. Vincent, and Foley at Aboukir, afford brilliant examples of that *impromptu* tact which arises from high professional skill. And as for our senior officers in the present day; in similar circumstances they would doubtless acquit themselves respectably—that is their *métier*,—day-dreams of such exploits amused their early ambition,—traditions and memories of such achievements constitute the professional lore of their declining years; these are their pebbles and their slings: as for the sword and the spear, the steam squadron and the gun-boat, they have not proved them.

It cannot be denied that steam has undermined our seaman-

ship. If we trace the sources of our excellence in nautical skill, they will be found partly in our race, partly in the physical circumstances of our country. Flowing sentences have been penned, beginning with 'the insular position of Great Britain, her rivers and her tides,' in which it is shown that we could not help being sailors. A population of monkeys, or a colony of Italian music masters in our circumstances would, could, and must have done the same. But it will be found, notwithstanding, that we owe something to our race. Our cousins of Sweden and Denmark have much aptitude for the sea; their near neighbours in Northern Germany far less; the Russians little or none; and all the efforts of their government have failed to create it. In Scotland, where the races are less fused than in England, the Danish villages supply hardy fishermen and excellent seamen; the Celtic inhabitants are inferior. The Anglo-Saxon colonists of the Western Continent have lost little time in developing the maritime resources of their country. The South American settlers of other races, like cats, have an aversion to wet feet; or if they go afloat, cut a paltry figure among the waves. The Chinese, who live in boats, are no seamen; and our worthy neighbour the Dutchman, who takes his wife and little ones aboard, *et circum pictis vehitur sua rura phaselis*, though a good seaman, is not equal to ourselves. Our national passion for yachts and pleasure-boats points in the same direction. *Navita nascitur non fit* may be said with some measure of truth; and a nation of seamen can no more be produced by circumstance alone than a man can become a Paganini by keeping a big fiddle under his bed.

It is to be hoped that this view of the case may be correct, for that share of nautical excellence which we owe to innate aptitude we may hope to retain. That which was produced by tides, rivers, and other geographical causes is rapidly leaving us, under the powerful influence of steam. It was not to the facility afforded us by our numerous harbours that our skill was chiefly due; on the contrary, it was to their very difficulty and perplexity. The approach to London, from the South Foreland to Orfordness, is a complete network of sands. The same is the case (more or less) with Hull, Liverpool, Bristol, and Glasgow. The track of our colliers winds among sands, rocks, and whirling tides almost from Newcastle to London Bridge. I may say, without fear of contradiction, that an Indiaman encountered more difficulty between Beachy Head and the London Docks than from the Cape to the Lizard. The manœuvres by which a heavy ship is conducted through these narrow waters are of the greatest delicacy, and put the

skill of him who commands and of those who obey to the severest test. A young officer could neither leave his country nor return to port without receiving a practical lesson in the powers and properties of a ship which at present a voyage round the world would fail to afford him. The same was the case with the men. Constantly and unavoidably exercised in all the details of a seafaring life, they could not fail to appreciate the labour which a clumsy officer imposed upon them, and the quickness and address with which a clever commander worked his ship, and they acquired a degree of intelligence which no artificial exercise or drilling could supply. Our enormous commerce furnished numerous pupils to this admirable school; and it was the pride of our officers that the royal service should always maintain the front rank in skill and smartness, as well as in daring and resolution.

These circumstances, and others, combined to give English seamen a degree of tact and *savoir faire* which appeared to be intuitive, and which other nations in vain attempted to supply by theoretic education. An illiterate, pudding-faced British skipper, who knows nothing on earth but his latitude, will contrive, with his clumsy, half-manned collier, to scramble out of a scrape, where an intelligent and well-educated foreigner, with a smart ship and a strong crew, will infallibly go ashore. Bitterly do Napoleon and his admirals lament the comparative inaptitude in those days of their officers:—'The extreme ignorance of my captains,' says Admiral Villaret Joyeuse in 1795, 'defeated all my measures, and my heart was nearly broken by the misfortunes which I foresaw from that moment.' 'Our sailors,' says Admiral Villeneuve, quoted by La Graviere, 'are not drilled for storms. The squadron looks well at anchor when the crews are well-appointed and perform their exercise well; but when the storm came, all was changed,—it was impossible to work the ship.'

Speaking of Sir Robert Calder's action, the same admiral writes:—'Unaccustomed to fleet manœuvres, each captain during the fog had no other idea than of following his second ahead; and here we are, the laughing-stock of Europe.'*

Again, in allusion to a probable attack by an inferior British force at night, or in a breeze:—'I have no doubt that such an attack would succeed, because from want of sea-practice, the slightest accident at night throws us into disorder and confusion.'†

A practical illustration of these remarks is afforded by the battle of Sir James Saumarez in the Straits of Gibraltar.

* *La Graviere*, p. 199. † Ibid. 214.

The British squadron, repulsed at Algesiras with the loss of the *Hannibal*, lay at Gibraltar in a shattered state. The enemy, reinforced by the Spanish fleets, were in the proportion of two to one. Nevertheless, on the fifth day, the whole squadron, even the dismasted *Cæsar* abandoned by the Admiral, who considered her condition hopeless, was ready for action.

I quote from Brenton, whose brother, the late Admiral Sir Jahleel Brenton, was then Captain of the *Cæsar*:—

At one o'clock the enemy's squadron was nearly all under way. The *Cæsar* was warping out of the mole. The day was clear; the whole population of the Rock came out to witness the scene; the line-wall, mole-head, and batteries were crowded, from the dock-yard to the ragged staff,—the *Cæsar's* band playing, 'Come, cheer up, my lads, 'tis to glory we steer,'—the military band of the garrison answering with 'Britons, strike home.'

The effect of this scene it is difficult to describe. Englishmen were proud of their country; and foreigners who beheld the scene wished to be Englishmen. So general was the enthusiasm, that the wounded men begged to be taken on board to share in the honours of the approaching conflict.

Thus, after one of the severest engagements ever known, the British squadron, in the short space of five days, repaired its damages, and again sought the enemy, whose force had become tripled by the junction of the squadron from Cadiz.

A running fight by night ensued; the wind freshened to a gale. One Spanish three-decker, engaged by the *Superb*, in her confusion, fell aboard of her second astern. The two Spanish ships, after cannonading each other, caught fire, and blew up. A third was captured. At day-break it was calm; the *Venerable*, dismasted in the action, was ashore, and threatened by the enemy,—the ship a wreck, and striking heavily on the rocks. Before sunset the enemy were off for Cadiz, and the *Venerable* was rounding Cape Trafalgar under jury-masts, and in such efficient order as to be fit for action had an enemy appeared.

With these officers and these seamen, disciplined in the rough old school of Jervis, nothing seemed to be impossible.

Such was our superiority in times past, and to such causes it may be traced.

Now, however, it is otherwise. A steam voyage is no school for seamanship. A young officer may cross the Atlantic half-a-dozen times, and never see a manœuvre beyond the simplest routine. An enterprising youth, ambitious of distinction in his profession, might study seamanship with more advantage on the pier at Hungerford.

Through the charm of a few magical sentences—'ease her,' 'back her,' 'stop her,' 'turn ahead,'—a kind of marine abracadabra—all the feats of nautical skill and science are now

performed by any man who has the average ability of a cabman. As regards the seamanship of the service, the delight of the thing is gone; the interest is quenched by the utter simplicity and facility of the task.

In order to deprive an officer still more completely of the means of acquiring skill in his profession, we lay all the duties of navigation and pilotage upon the master and his subordinate. This officer, who is charged with the most responsible and important of the ordinary duties of the ship, is precluded from rising in his profession, and must be a master for ever. This is as unjust as it is absurd. The custom dates from the time before Henry VIII., when the navy consisted of merchant ships taken up by the king: and the present master is the lineal descendant of the merchant skipper of old times, who was hired with his ship. The duties of the master should be performed by the second lieutenant, and those of the assistant master by the senior mate. It will not be denied that a lieutenant in the navy who is unable to navigate his ship, has clearly mistaken his vocation.

Formerly, the conversation in the ward-room was of winds and currents, of the prospects of the voyage, the progress of the ship. Now all this is at an end. The huge steamer gets under way; the officers devoutly pray for a foul wind, to save bother with the sails; the course is given—'turn ahead;' the good ship proceeds on her steady, undeviating track, and the most enthusiastic seaman is beat by the monotony of the thing. 'What is she doing?' 'Eight and a-half, and I think it's going to rain.' The nautical conversation can get no further, and is given up. The crew, to divert their minds from mischief, are kept labouring in vain to scrub the great blackamoor white; and, as far as seamanship is concerned, the whole vehicle might just as well be an omnibus.

In the merchant service, happily, a class of noble sailing ships for ocean voyages has sprung up,—the *Marco Polo*, the *Lightning*, the *Red Jacket*, and many more—which bid fair for a while to keep ahead of steam, and show their sterns to those unsightly, lanky, dangerous iron coffins, in the shape of merchant steamers, which we are so continually called upon to admire. In time, however, they will have to give way to the increased size and improved build of steamers; and like broken-down gentlemen, they will set up a screw in the end. Even as it is, no sooner do they arrive at the Downs, than the watchful little tug takes them by the nose, and leads them in happy ignorance to their destination.

The consequence of all this is, that when an emergency occurs, and seamanship is required, it is not forthcoming.

The clipper ship overruns her reckoning—blunders among the breakers; the men can't handle the sails—the captain can't make them—and the ship is lost; or, the compass of a huge iron steamer indulges in some playful eccentricity,—the great monster, with her freight of unsuspecting passengers, creeps out of her course, and surprises all hands by bumping herself upon a reef, where, in due time, she breaks her back, or knocks her red bottom to pieces, and is not.

Much, however, as seamanship has declined since the general introduction of steam, still, many years must elapse before steam can usurp the place of sail, for commerce, and especially for the coasting trade; and we may still hope to retain among us some seamen who know their business. In the service, also, great changes must be made in the consumption or stowage of fuel, before a man-of-war can venture to part with her sails. Naval operations will not always be conducted in such narrow waters as the Baltic and the Euxine: men-of-war will return to their old haunts—to those vast oceans where havens are remote, and where constant breezes blow. Here, for general purposes, sail must long continue to be master of the situation. It is, therefore, with sound judgment that the Admiralty, insensible to the exaggerated popular feeling for small craft and steamers, has persisted in constructing those noble ships, that can enlist the winds into their service or call the strong spirit of steam to aid them, at their will. With a foresight that looked beyond the present struggle, they have enriched the country with a fleet which, in a real naval war will be the Queen, as it now is the Pride of the Sea.

Every man-of-war and every transport should be, not only a steamer but a sailing ship, complete at all points. The necessity under which a mere steamer lies of frequently replenishing fuel is entirely incompatible with the requirements of war. To keep the sea for months, in attendance upon an army, perhaps among the antipodes,—to maintain a blockade on the coast of an enterprising enemy, who would infallibly seize every one of those helpless colliers which the Russians suffer to sleep uninjured on the sea,—to perform long voyages where the trade winds prevail,—all these are duties to which sails are essential, almost indispensable.

Such transports as the *Himalaya*, the *Prince*, the *Cottenham*, and the *Perseverance*, are open to grave objections. They convey a large force with speed and comfort, but there are few harbours that can receive them—few coasts that they can approach. In entering even such a passage as the Needles, they not unfrequently become unmanageable; if they take the ground, being constructed of iron, in spite of their water-

tight compartments, they generally break in pieces. For one reason or another, they are always in mischief; and if a disaster occurs, it is a national calamity. Transports should be active, handy ships, that can enter harbours, approach the shore, sail with a breeze, or steam against it. Ships of a thousand tons, though perhaps not so comfortable, are far safer, and better suited for transports, than these monsters of the deep.*

Thus we may see that the various avocations of naval war will long, perhaps always, continue to demand and develop a considerable amount of purely nautical skill; still it is not probable that a naval action will ever again be fought under sail, and, as far as fighting is concerned, the days of sail and seamanship are numbered. Even if we continued to possess the seamanship which contributed so largely to our victories in former years, it would cease to give us that superiority which it used to command; we shall soon lose it; but it will no longer be required. Sailors must be replaced by gunners, and seamanship by drill.

It is pardonable enough if those who love the British navy are led most reluctantly to this unwelcome conviction. Our sailing ships were such noble vessels—they had served us so well—we had brought the art to such consummate perfection —we had gained the first prize, and had become the wonder of the world; and now we must leave our high position and begin again, from the very alphabet of a new science, to win our smoky way to success.

There was such a charm in the old life—such real poetry; we were wont to learn our task in the great volume of Nature, —the clouds, the stars, the sunset and the morning mist— these were our studies and our lore. Now, a heated bearing, a damaged feedpipe, or a stomach-ache in the steam-box, are the romance and poetry of a sailor's life.

And then the beautiful cleanliness of an old man-of-war. The ship shone with brightness; her deck white—her masts varnished and glistening—her lofty sails, her rigging and her yards all clean, orderly, symmetrical—and her long line of hammocks on either side, scrubbed to brilliant whiteness, gladdened the eyes of all that looked upon her; now the unhappy first lieutenant is doomed to see his deck begrimed with

---

* On the disaster of the *Prince* it is unnecessary to remark. One circumstance, however, should be noted. When the mizenmast was cut away, the wreck fouled the screw, and destroyed the last hope of safety. This gives us a valuable lesson on the danger of taking screw ships into action with their top hamper aloft. The loss of a single spar, with its gear, might disable a ship, and render her capture or destruction inevitable.

smut: he may scrape and scrub, but down comes the envious soot, and covers guns, sails, spars, and deck with filthy stains; nay, regardless of all propriety, it alights and takes up its quarters on the very nose and whiskers of that laborious functionary.

Add to this the intolerable dirt and nuisance of coaling, and the sort of stoker-and-poker life which steam entails upon our officers and men, and it would be surprising indeed if these seamen of the old school did not look back with regret to the profession they have lost, and with some little blindness and perversity to the infinitely more enterprising, daring, and enlarged profession which is before them.

If these views be true, we shall no longer feel much wonder if the performances of the fleet have fallen somewhat short of our too sanguine expectations.

Our senior officers, with their reminiscences of past achievements, unable to accommodate their minds to the increased resources of ships, and pestered with gloomy treatises on shot and shell, fell into the hands of the tacticians. And it is well known that where the counsels of these gentlemen prevail, there is little chance of fight. In the Baltic in 1854, the appearance of a certain officer's gig alongside the flag-ship was tantamount to the negative signal, and one captain is said to have sent his men from quarters whenever the ill-omened boat came in sight. Precious time was lost in demonstration, and though none could share the Admiral's conviction that the Russians would surely come out and fight, we can all sympathize with the long-cherished hope of the old officer, that he might still live to gain a naval victory, and place his name in the rank of Howe, and Duncan, and St. Vincent. In dreams like these the summer passed. Sveaborg might have been reconnoitred in May and bombarded in September, whereas it was reconnoitred in September and bombarded in 1855. Of Riga, Revel, Port-Baltic, Vyborg, Abö, and Cronstadt, it is enough to say that nothing beyond a reconnaisance was attempted, and consequently nothing was done.

In the present year the Baltic fleet sailed under the auspices of an Admiral who commands, in a singular degree, the respect of his officers. In discipline and efficiency the fleet made great advances, and, as we have seen, it was vastly increased in activity and resources. Still, can we venture to maintain that all has been done that was possible? At Sveaborg, sixteen English mortars were tried, as if they were some novel experiment, and when they were expended, the Admiral's resources were at an end, and the other Russian ports still continue as they were.

It was obvious to every one present that by the same means the military town of Helsingfors, its barracks, rope factories, docks, and stores, might have been made to rival the blaze of Sveaborg, and we can see no reason why other places should not have shared their fate. The frigate squadrons have displayed considerable activity,—on a small scale, it is true; and Captain Yelverton has shown us that heavy ships can find their way up rivers, destroy barracks, blow up batteries, and raise terror and dismay along the enemy's coast.

It is rumoured, however, I know not with what truth, that such achievements as these find little favour at home, and that an active, dashing officer is sure to find himself cushioned in a block-ship, or shelved quietly with a civil appointment; nor would it create much surprise if, some day, the captain of the *Arrogant* were appointed to hoist his pendant at the Hospital Island, in Farö Sound, and the dashing officer who commands the *Magicienne* were made inspector of bumboats to the fleet.

Let us pass over the unsatisfactory affairs at Odessa and Sebastopol, and find what consolation we can in the spirited doings of our small craft in the Sea of Azoff.

As a contrast to the lethargic tactics of modern days, it is quite a relief to borrow a page from the biography of a living naval officer:—

Being promoted to the command, 28th of March following, of the *Speedy* sloop, of 14 guns and 54 men, he commenced a series of operations against the enemy unparalleled for activity and success, becoming the personal captor, within the short space of fourteen months, of 33 vessels, carrying together 128 guns and 533 men, besides assisting at the capture of many others. To particularise every dashing exploit performed by Lord Cochrane during his continuance in the *Speedy*, would lead us far beyond our limits, but there is one feat, from its transcendent heroism, that we cannot pass over in silence. On the 6th of May, 1801, being off Barcelona, the *Speedy* fell in with the Spanish frigate *El Gamo*, of 32 heavy guns and 319 men, one of several vessels that had been sent to effect his capture. Undaunted by a force so comparatively enormous, her gallant commander instantly commenced a close action, and, after a cannonade of forty-five minutes, ran alongside his lofty antagonist, whom, at the head of only 40 men, he impetuously boarded and carried.

In May, 1806, Lord Cochrane distinguished himself by the destruction of the semaphores along the French coasts, and, notwithstanding the defence of the militia, demolished the posts at Pointe de la Roche, Caliola, and L'Ance de Repos, burnt down the buildings, and bore off the signal-flags. He also carried by storm the battery at Pointe d'Equilon, destroyed its stores, and blew up the barrack and magazine.

In September, 1808, his lordship renewed his operations against the semaphores on the coast of France, where he completely destroyed those which had since been erected—Bourdique, La Pinde St. Maguire, Frontignan, Cenet, and Foy, with the houses attached to them, fourteen barracks belonging to the gens-d'armes, a battery, and a strong tower on Lake Frontignan. Indeed, he kept the whole of the enemy's coast in a constant state of alarm, suspended their trade, and, by the diversion he thus created, prevented those troops which had been intended for Figueras from advancing into the Peninsula. Returning to the coast of Spain, Lord Cochrane volunteered the defence of Trinidad Castle, attached to the fortress of Rosas, then besieged by the French, a thousand of whose picked men, at the head of eighty of his own people, and about an equal number of Spaniards, he repelled, 30th November, 1808, in an assault made by them on the castle. He protracted the siege for twelve days, and then, finding further opposition useless, in consequence of the citadel having capitulated, he blew up the magazines of Trinidad Castle, and returned to his ship. The captain of the *Impérieuse* subsequently rendered the Commander-in-chief the important service of presenting him with the key of the enemy's telegraph signals on the heights of Toulon, which enabled him to derive information twice a day, not only of the movements of the enemy, but of his own cruisers, from the South promontory of Italy to Cape Rosas in Spain.

These few sentences will serve to show the spirit in which a naval war ought to be waged. It is thus that a maritime power can make her force felt and respected. There is a theory now, that unfortified towns are not to be assailed, from motives of humanity, while those which have fortifications must be spared from prudential reasons,—we may neither bind the strong man nor spoil his goods. These two propositions will lead us to the logical conclusion that batteries are of no value and ships of no use.

With such a squadron as we possess, it is evident that action and enterprise are indispensable,—their strength is in their activity; rest and security are fatal to the essential qualities of our ships. Perilous enterprises and energetic measures are the food they live on and the air they breathe. Two or three hairbreadth escapes will teach a sailor more than a thousand theories. A man who has never been in a scrape has no notion of the extent of his own resources, or the capabilities of his ship to get out of one.

The loss of a ship should count nothing as compared with the success of an enterprise. It is in vain to calculate with shop-keeping accuracy the balance between the expenditure of a brilliant action and its cost to the foe. To make the calculation just, we must have a phobometer to gauge the

consternation of the enemy, and logarithmic tables to express the value of his fears in current coin of the realm. In 1810, when four frigates were lost at Grand Port, in the Isle of France, the gallant defence of the *Nereide*, and 'noble behaviour of her officers and crew, threw such a halo of glory around the defeat of Grand Port, that in public opinion, at least, the loss of four frigates was scarcely considered a misfortune.'*

It was always the policy of Nelson to support and encourage a captain who, in a daring affair, had the misfortune to lose a ship; and in his despatches he espouses the cause of an officer so circumstanced in the warmest terms. Relying on the support of such a chief, Nelson's officers were ready to go anywhere and to do anything.

Now, however, it is the usage of the day not to encourage, but to deter. An officer going into action receives a homily on the virtue of caution; and the prudence of those that refrain, and the judgment of those who retire, are sure to be lauded in the despatch. An exaggerated sense of responsibility is fatal to the success of an active fleet. No British officer is deterred by dislike for fighting, or fear of death,—many are daunted by the fear of failure and the dread of reproof.

Meanwhile the disease will spread downwards. It is just possible that there may be, by this time, such a strange *rara avis* in the service as a captain who is a little shy, and in another year or two of inaction we shall begin to discover a lieutenant who is enamoured of prudence, or a midshipman who has a sense of his responsibilities.

An active system of coast warfare has a great effect in rendering the war irksome and unpopular with the enemy. Even in the most despotic country public opinion must have weight, and it must be impossible, or at least unsafe, to protract an unpopular war.

Now, nothing can have so strong an effect upon the popular mind as the feeling of personal loss and insecurity. A bloody war between soldiers and sailors a long way off, is usually popular with the masses,—the stirring narratives excite their feelings and rouse their martial ardour; but, as a near neighbour, no man loves war. A citizen who has seen warehouses and dwellings in a blaze, who has heard the shell crashing through the black ruins, once the sources of wealth and the abode of domestic peace, who has seen at his own door the ghastly forms of wounded men, who has shuddered at the cold features of the dead,—a citizen who has had such experiences of war, is sure to be a member of the Peace party,

* *James*, v. 296.

—people do not like being killed and wounded, and losing all their property.

And we hold that the truest humanity is that which tends soonest to bring so great a curse as war to an end. Not to pursue this subject into debateable ground, even if private property be spared, the approach of hostile ships, the sight of armed enemies burning semaphores, destroying barracks, blowing up batteries, towing off ships,—the din of their guns, and the roar of conflagrations,—all these things keep a coast in constant anxiety and alarm, and have more influence upon popular opinion than even the loss of a distant stronghold, or the slaughter of a host of soldiers.

For such services as these our ships and gunboats are now admirably adapted—our seamen are entirely unfit. Seamen are capital fellows for dragging guns and manning batteries ashore,—their cheerfulness and indifference to hardship are invaluable, but in such expeditions as these they cannot be trusted or controlled. They cannot be kept in any sort of formation, but straggle recklessly about, and no power can restrain them from blazing away at any cat or cockatoo that chance may throw in their way.

A sailor with a rifle or a musket is an amusing sight: they handle it as if it were a marlin-spike, and they invariably shut both eyes, and flinch half a foot from the recoil. I have seen a number of men discharging muskets through a port, and the utmost efforts of their officer could not prevent them from wounding the port-sill and setting fire to a hammock with the flash. With cutlasses they are equally inefficient. It is strange to see the miserably unhappy look of a British tar the while he is undergoing his musketry or cutlass drill.

For all these services, the very essence of which is often suddenness and surprise, a compact, highly-drilled force is indispensable. If the choice lay between a hundred blue-jackets or fifty marines to march two miles, surprise a battery, and burn a telegraph, I believe nine officers out of ten would choose the marines.

The Swedes, fully aware of this, have organized their gun-boat service on an entirely different footing from the navy. The men are entered at an early age, well cared for, and well clothed. They are fully instructed, drilled, and exercised as soldiers and sailors too. They live in barracks, mount guard, and are in fact regular troops. In the summer, squadrons of gun-boats are sent to Slithamn, to Farö, or other places, and the crews are practised in rowing, sailing, gunnery, and camp life. It is a most efficient service, and well worthy of our imitation.

The appearance of the men in their well-made blue coats, Scotch bonnets, and black cross-belts is excellent; they are very fine sturdy fellows, and have always behaved admirably in action.

Now that we have adopted so largely the use of steam gunboats, vessels that seldom or never hoist a sail, some such change as this is imperatively demanded. We want men who must be soldiers, and if they are sailors all the better. We get men who may perhaps be sailors, but can be nothing more. Men cannot be drilled properly on board ship, or if, with much pains and perseverance, some progress should have been made, and a corps of men got together who can be depended on, the ship is paid off, and the whole thing is disorganized and destroyed.

But if I mistake not, the signs of the times point to changes in our naval system far more extensive than this—changes that will not be effected for years, so violent will be the opposition caused by old associations and pardonable prejudices; but the changes must come sooner or later, and we can only hope that some grave disaster may not be necessary to induce us to shake off a favourite and time-honoured system which altered circumstances are rapidly rendering obsolete.

In times past we wanted seamen, and we got them ready-made. An officer's first hope and duty was, by superior seamanship, to gain a commanding position at close quarters, and then, amidst the wreck of tumbling spars and sails, perhaps within pistol-shot of the foe, with the miserable gunnery which then prevailed on both sides, seamanship won the day.

How will it be now? Not a sail will be set, not a man aloft; protected by lofty bulwarks, the crews will go into action, not to sail the ship, but to fight the guns. The gunner will win; the seaman will have no place. Again, when boarders were called, in the confused state of a ship's decks in action, where no formation could be maintained, and with the harmless small-arms of that day, the impetuous rush of seamen carried all before it. Now, with a clear deck and the new rifle, every effort of irregular bravery would be vain against the closed ranks and the murderous fire of regular troops.

The truth must surely begin to dawn upon us that with steam men-of-war and the formidable weapons of the present day mere seamen are not what we require. In these times it is not perhaps three times a week that men are called upon to go aloft, and I believe, except that they neither go aloft nor row the boats, the Royal Marines perform almost all the duties of seamen.

Far be it from me to depreciate British sailors: they are noble fellows, but it does not follow that they should possess by intuition the perfect knowledge of manual or platoon; that they being by nature steeped in tar, versed in sails and seizings, and professors of the Carrick bend and the Matthew Walker knot, should comprehend how to form square, to receive cavalry, and to perform the complicated manœuvres of the 'sodger,' which they from their hearts do most thoroughly hate and despise.

We know how many months of patient drill it takes to make a soldier. Three years is the term assigned by Sir William Napier, and yet we take the first man we find in the purlieus of Mutton Cove or the Common Hard, and in a few months we are to make him a sailor and a soldier too.

As it is, a sailor enters to serve in a ship, and when the ship's commission expires, he is paid off into the streets. A sailor ought to be enlisted to serve his country, and when the voyage is over, he ought to be received in barracks, there to learn and practise the duties of his calling. Our seamen, instead of being picked up and turned adrift in the present desultory fashion, the obsolete consequence of a bygone state of things, should be an embodied permanent force, consisting of men enrolled at an early age, carefully and maturely trained to meet the various exigencies of modern naval war.

A step has already been taken in the right direction, by entering men, with increased privileges, for a term of years; and all thanks are due to Sir Howard Douglas and Admiral Chads for their exertions in promoting the science and practice of naval gunnery; but without the barrack system it is impossible to make soldiers of seamen, and in these times soldiers they must be.

The difficulty of raising men on such a system I believe to be imaginary. There is no particular difficulty in recruiting for the Royal Marines: we should not perhaps get exactly the same class of men; but pay them well, clothe them well, and treat them well, and we should have no lack of men, and good men too.

In the French navy every seaman in the country, till he attains the age of fifty, is bound to serve in the royal navy if called on: when in service they live in barrack, and are drilled and marched like other troops. And it is no answer to say that such a system was not successful in the late war: that was a war of seamanship; and from our protracted blockades the French sailors, when they escaped to sea, were frequently prostrated by sea-sickness and want of practice,

and were commonly disabled by the first gale they encountered.*

Nor can we admit financial objections. Where such an expensive machine as a ship is employed, the best crew must be the cheapest. A ship, on a rough calculation, costs a thousand pounds a gun. Supposing that ten ships on the plan proposed should be found equal to twelve with ordinary crews, the balance of economy would be more than restored.

It cannot be too often repeated that the use of steam, the improvement in guns and gunnery, and the introduction of the rifle, demand an entirely different system of manning our ships.

If it should be impossible or inexpedient to introduce at once so great a change in the whole naval system, at all events the experiment should be fairly tested in the gun-boat service.

Formed into squadrons, under the command of an enterprising officer, and manned by a force especially drilled and trained for the purpose, they would be doubly efficient. Line-of-battle ship officers and sailors have little experience in the tricks and peculiarities of small craft; they look upon them as playthings; but to handle them properly, to take them in safety through the labyrinths of shoal and rock which protect an enemy's position, to navigate them in stormy seas, to know every roadstead and every sand that will afford them shelter in a gale is no *cuivis homini* task. The spectacle of a squadron of gun-boats unexpectedly cast adrift in the King's Channel a few hours' sail from Sheerness, and then and there utterly bewildered and scattered about among the sands like a flock of sparrows, is surely a disgraceful sight—not disgraceful to the officers concerned, for it was no part of their duty to know the pilotage of the port of London,—but disgraceful to the service in which such elementary knowledge is not required.

All such matters would enter into the course of training, both of officers and men, in a regular gun-boat service; they would be practised in landing and embarking through surf, in surveying shoals, harbours, and bays. In the Swedish service gun-boats are provided with field artillery, and the men are practised in the duties of camp life, in the use of the rifle, and in the employments of light infantry they need be inferior to none. They should be the skirmishers, the pioneers, and the foragers of the fleet.

---

* *La Graviere*, 174.

The crew of the old Swedish gun-boat was sixty men, and their navy has 278 such vessels on its list. The boats are now of little value; but the crews, if kept up to the full complement, would constitute (on a small scale) such a force as perhaps no other service could produce. Our seamen, our marines, and our marine artillery and coast-guard, are all excellent in their way; and it would be strange if from such materials we could not hammer out a service suited to the requirements and capabilities of gun-boats; a service analogous to that excellent corps which forms the chief strength and defence of the Swedish coast. It is true, a service of this nature would be arduous, and require attainments on the part of officers and men of no common order; but it would offer means of active employment and opportunities of distinction, such as a regular navy can rarely present. Accustomed to manœuvre together on a definite system, and with officers and men thoroughly up to their work, these dashing little craft would develop powers and resources hitherto unknown, and would ere long find a solution to many a received impossibility.

If we once possessed in the gun-boat service the nucleus of such a force, it would not be long before the system would be extended. Our officers would feel such confidence in the steadiness of a trained and disciplined force, instead of the rude goodwill and careless courage of hastily raised and half-drilled sailors, that they would venture ashore, beat up the enemy's positions, and leave nothing safe from their researches. It would require a vastly increased force to protect a coast from the ravages of such a slippery and impracticable foe.

A still more important consideration is, the value, the necessity of such a force as this for purposes of national defence. It was with this view that the Swedish gun-boat service was originally constituted by Ehrensvärd, the constructor of the defences at Sveaborg; and the experience of eighty years has so established the excellence of such a force, that many officers, carrying the principle to an extreme, are desirous of abolishing entirely the regular fleet of Sweden, and depending solely upon steam gun-boats, manned by well-trained and well-disciplined gun-boat seamen.

It is the genius of Englishmen to allow matters to shake down and adjust themselves as they can; but it may be well sometimes to abandon the time-honoured system of *laissez faire*, and to try the effect of a little foresight and organization, if it be only for the sake of a change.

It will, I fear, be thought presumptuous in a civilian to put forward such decided opinions on subjects entirely professional. In former days, the sentiments of the unpro-

fessional world in naval matters were wont to be received as Charles XI. of Sweden received the remonstrances of the good and virtuous Ulrica Eleonore: 'Votre affaire, Madame, c'est de nous donner des enfans, et non pas des avis.' The pressgang demanded our *enfans*, and the Admiralty execrated our *avis*. Now, however, we may venture to hope that our crude notions, such as they may be, will be received with more forbearance. Under all circumstances, it will be a consolation to know that the opinions which have now found so weak an exponent, are shared by others who, not being civilians, are more competent to judge.

We are jealous for the service which we have loved and admired—which supplied the day-dreams of our youth—which has adorned the annals of our country.

It is painful to hear it said by foreign lips that our naval glory has culminated, and is already on its decline.

It is humiliating to find that, in the judgment of Europe, even our boasted and glorious fleet has failed to advance us beyond the second place in the once equal and ever happy alliance.

It is mortifying to believe that officers equal, in all respects, to the pupils of Jervis, the friends and comrades of Nelson and Collingwood, are tied and chained to the dull routine of a timid and inactive policy.

It is a disappointment to find that the energy and resource of the service have not kept pace with its improved means and materials.

It is intolerable to believe that a remedy can be found, and that timid counsels or financial considerations should deprive us of it.

It is mockery to tell us that England is not prepared for such a remedy. England is prepared for anything rather than a timid policy and an inefficient fleet.

R. E. H.

ALFRED TENNYSON'S POEMS.

AN essay upon a poet's writings may take one of two forms. It may either confine itself to an analysis of those writings with a view to discover the source of their power over the sympathies of men, or it may treat of the place the poet occupies in the literature of his time and country. The latter plan requires not only more knowledge and greater power of comprehensive survey on the part of the writer, but readers who are thoroughly acquainted both with the poet under review and all those with whom he is brought into comparison. This volume might doubtless find a sufficient number of readers thus qualified, among the class to which it is particularly addressed; and a comparison of Mr. Tennyson's genius and productions with those of Byron, Shelley, Scott, Keats, and Wordsworth, would have abundant interest if it were executed with ability and judgment. The motives which, in spite of these reasons, have induced a preference for the former and easier plan, are twofold. In the first place, the writer has no confidence in his own ability for a philosophical estimate of the essential characteristics of the poetry of the first and second quarters of the present century; he fears running into vague generalities and dogmatical assertions, where there is not space for testing his opinions by quotation and analysis of detail and construction. In the second place, his own experience leads him to think that analytical criticism of Mr. Tennyson's poems is likely to be interesting and serviceable to a large class of readers, though, of course, it can have little charm for persons who by talent and study are better qualified than he is to write such a criticism themselves. It has often happened to him to meet with persons of unquestioned talent and good taste, who profess themselves unable to understand why Mr. Tennyson is placed so high among poets as his admirers are inclined to place him; who say they find him obscure and affected,—the writer for a class rather than for a people. The object of this paper is to show that we, who do

admire him, have a reason for our faith; that we are not actuated by blind preference for the man who echoes merely our own class feelings and opinions in forms that suit our particular tastes and modes of thought,—but that Mr. Tennyson is a poet of large compass, of profound insight, of finished skill. We find him possessing the clearest insight into our modern life, one who discerns its rich poetical resources, who tells us what we are and may be; how we can live free, joyous, and harmonious lives; what grand elements of thought, feeling, and action lie round us; what a field there is for the various activities fermenting within us. We do not call him a Shakspeare, or even a Chaucer; but what Shakspeare and Chaucer did for the ages they lived in, Mr. Tennyson is doing for our age, after his measure. He is showing it to us as an age in which an Englishman may live a man's life, and be neither a mere man of business, nor a mere man of pleasure, but may find in his affections, studies, business, and relaxations scope for his spiritual faculties.

The main difficulty of the task has lain in the fact that the poems of Mr. Tennyson are never repetitions, in the great variety both of form and matter they exhibit. It has been impossible to do without special mention of a great number of poems, and the result is necessarily somewhat fragmentary and discursive. It turns out rather a commentary than an essay; but its object will be answered, and the expectations of the writer amply satisfied, if it helps only a few persons to enjoy Tennyson more than they have hitherto done, and to understand better the ground of the claim that is made for him of belonging to the great poets. Little more has been attempted with the three longest poems, *The Princess*, *In Memoriam*, and *Maud*, than to place the reader in the true point of view, and examine certain prejudices against them which have obtained currency among us. Indeed, that was all that was absolutely necessary, as the hostile opinions have seldom been expressed unaccompanied by admiration of the beauties of detail in which these poems abound.

Mr. Tennyson published his first volume of poems in 1830,* when he was an under-graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge. It must always possess considerable interest for those who read and admire his maturer productions; but, with few exceptions, the poems it contains owe their main attraction to the fact that they are the earliest efforts of one who has gained a position of which they afforded no certain promise. Many of

* There is, we believe, an earlier volume of poems published by Alfred and Charles Tennyson, but we have never seen a copy; and the volume of 1830 is sufficiently juvenile for a starting-point.

them are exquisitely musical—great command of the resources of metre is manifest—and a richness of phraseology everywhere abounds. But substantial interest they certainly want, because they present no phenomena of nature or of human life with force and distinctness, tell no story, express no passion or clear thought, depict no person, thing, or scene that the mind can recognise for a reality. They are as far as possible from what might be expected of one who describes the poet as

> Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
> The love of love,

and assigns to him the ministry of WISDOM, of whom he writes—

> No sword
> Of wrath her right arm hurled,
> But one poor poet's scroll, and with his word
> She shook the world.

So far from shaking the world, they are incapable of raising emotions in a solitary heart; so far from being instruments of wisdom, they scarcely reach the altitudes of ordinary sense. Take the first poem of the series, for example, *Claribel*. It is not quite certain what the precise feeling of the melody is, —whether it expresses a grief that, finding no consolation in its memories or hopes, is deepened by the sweet sights and sounds of the quiet churchyard; or a grief that finds in these a soothing influence. Taking, however, the latter as the more probable theory, though no poem ought to admit of such a doubt, how singularly this treatment of the subject eliminates all that is most striking and affecting in it. If we mourn the early removal of one who was dear and lovely in her life, and whose memory lends a softening charm to the spot where her body lies, it is on her gentle and affectionate nature, on her grace and beauty, that the mind loves to linger in visiting her grave; it is these that make the place interesting, the recollection of these that consoles us who are deprived of her sweet presence. Or if the mind takes a loftier flight, it looks away from the past, and from the grave, to that bright world of spirits, in which the beauty and excellence that were so soon blighted here reach their consummate flower, and bloom through eternity in the still garden of souls. But Mr. Tennyson says nothing of all this; his memory of the dead forms only a medium through which the living sights and sounds of nature round the grave are harmonized in tone with his own sadness, while the stillness and sweetness of the scene soothe his sorrow into a calm repose; the quiet beauty of the churchyard blends with the image of the lost one, and he thinks of her hereafter in unutterable peace, amid the songs of birds, the

voice of the solemn oak-tree, the slow regular changes from morn to noon, from noon to midnight. This is to treat human life from its least impressive point of view,—to feel its sorrows and consolations in their least substantial and abiding power. It is, however, a real point of view; and both sorrow and consolation will sometimes assume this form spontaneously, though seldom so completely to the exclusion of more direct and powerful considerations, as in the poem of *Claribel.*

The poems inscribed with the names of women would furnish other examples of this perverse, unreal treatment of subjects capable of interesting the sympathies. There is in none of them any presentation of those distinct traits by which we recognise human beings, no action or speech, no description of mind, person, or history, but a series of epithets and similes which convey nothing, because we have not the image of the thing which they are intended to illustrate. Other poems are uninteresting from their subjects, such as *The Merman and Mermaid, The Sea Fairies, The Kraken, The Dying Swan,* &c. No music of verse, no pictorial power, will enable a reader to care for such creatures of the fancy; otherwise, both music and pictorial power are there. How clear the painting is here:—

> Slow sailed the weary mariners, and saw
> Between the green brink and the running foam,
> White limbs unrobed in a crystal air,
> Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms prest
> To little harps of gold.

How musical and vivid—

> There would be neither moon nor star,
> But the wave would make music above us afar;
> Low thunder and light, in the magic night,
> Neither moon nor star.

Though such subjects would seem wilfully chosen to avoid reality and human interest, they show throughout great power of painting scenery, and of associating it with the feelings of animated beings; and are in fact pictures of peculiar character, in which the objects grouped and the qualities attributed to them, are viewed through the medium of the beings associated with the scene. Thus they become dramatically descriptive, and display the germ of a principle of landscape painting which Mr. Tennyson has in his later poems brought to great perfection, and largely employed. The principle consists in a combination of landscape and figures in which the landscape is not merely background to the figures, or the figures animated objects in the landscape, but the two are dynamically related, so that the landscape is described as seen and felt by

the persons of the scene, under the influence of some emotion which selects objects congenial to its own moods, and modifies their generic appearances,—if the word *generic* may be used to express the appearance objects present to a mind in its ordinary, unexcited state. And thus we get a landscape which is at once ideal and real—a collection of actual images of external nature, grouped and coloured by a dominant idea; and the whole composition derives from this principle a harmony and a force of expression which, whether the principal aim be landscape painting or the delineation of human emotion, produce that dramatic unity demanded in works of art. Employed as the principle is in this early volume upon scenery that is strange, and upon emotions that are not human, it yet shows its power of producing a picture, throughout harmoniously conceived, and evidences a capacity for concentration that only needs substantially interesting material to work upon.

The poem which, better than any other in the first series, exhibits the power of concentrating the imagination upon the subject, to the exclusion of an extraneous and discordant train of thought, and at the same time furnishes an admirable instance of dramatic landscape-painting, or passion reflecting itself on landscape, is *Mariana*. As the physiologists tell us that the organs of the higher animals are found in an undeveloped state in those of lower type, we may look upon this poem as a foreshadowing of a kind of poetry that, in the later volumes, will be found in full perfection. In *Mariana*, the landscape details are presented with the minute distinctness with which they would strike upon the morbid sensibility of a woman abandoned to lonely misery, whose attention is distracted by no cares, pleasures, or satisfied affections. To the painter in search of the picturesque, or a happy observer seeing the sunny side of everything, or a utilitarian looking for the productive resources of the scene, the whole aspect of the fen-scenery would be totally different. But selected, grouped, and qualified by epithets, as the natural objects of the landscape are in the poem, they tell of the years of pain and weariness associated with them in the mind of the wretched Mariana, and produce an intense impression of hopeless suffering, which no other treatment of the single figure could have produced. The minute enumeration of detail would be a fault in a mere landscape-artist, whose object was to describe a natural scene. It is an excellence here, because no other means could so forcibly mark the isolation, the morbid sensitiveness, and the mind vacant of all but misery; because used thus, it becomes eminently dramatic,—the landscape expresses

the passion of the mind which contemplates it, and the passion gives unity and moral interest to the landscape. There is not, throughout the poem, a single epithet which belongs to the objects irrespective of the story with which the scene is associated, or a single detail introduced which does not aid the general impression of the poem. They mark either the pain with which Mariana looks at things, or the long neglect to which she has been abandoned, or some peculiarity of time and place which marks the morbid minuteness of her attention to objects. If the moss is *blackened*, the flower-plots *thickly crusted*, the nails *rusted*, the sheds *broken*, the latch *clinking*, the thatch *weeded and worn*, not one of these epithets but tells of long neglect, and prolongs the key-note of *sad and strange* loneliness. If

> She could not look on the *sweet* heaven,
> Either at morn or eventide;—

this epithet, startling at first from its apparent intrusion of the frame of mind in which the heaven is *sweet*, heightens the impression of that tear-blinded misery to which the light in its softest mildness is intolerable. Even at night, when the sky is enveloped in 'thickest dark,' when the flats are 'glooming,' she can only glance across the casement window. Her sleep is broken by sounds that painfully recal the desolate scene of daylight; her dreams are forlorn, and stamped with the hopeless monotony of her lot; and she wakes to shudder in a cold, windy, cheerless morn. The moat that surrounds her prison is no bright sparkling stream; clustered marsh mosses creep over its blackened and sleeping waters, stifling with their loathsome death in life the most active and joyous of nature's visible powers, and giving to the captive a striking emblem of her own choked and stagnant existence. The poplar hard by is never in repose, shaking like a sick man in a fever; for leagues round spreads the 'level waste, the rounding grey,' with no object, no variety, to interest the attention. What moves, moves always, harassing the nerves,—what is at rest seems dead, striking cold the heart. It is needless to pursue this analysis throughout a poem so familiar. The effect is felt by the reader with hardly a consciousness of the skill of the writer, or of the intense dramatic concentration implied in such employment of language. If expression were the highest aim of poetry, *Mariana in the Moated Grange* must be counted among the most perfect of poems, in spite of an occasional weakness of phrase. But almost perfect as the execution is, the subject is presented too purely as a picture of hopeless, unrelieved suffering, to deserve the name of a great

poem. The suffering is, so to speak, distinct and individual, but the woman who suffers is vague and indistinct; we have no interest in her, because we know nothing about her story or herself in detail; she is not a wronged and deserted woman, but an abstract generalization of wronged and deserted womanhood; all the individuality is bestowed upon the landscape in which she is placed. This again, as was said of *Claribel,* is to view human life from its least affecting and impressive side.

The task that lies before us will not allow us to dwell longer on the poems of the first volume. Taken as a whole, they indicate that Mr. Tennyson set out with the determination to be no copyist, and to abstain from setting to verse the mere personal emotions of his own actual life. Even the few poems that did express personal emotion he has excluded from his collected edition.

> To hold converse with all forms
> Of the manysided mind,—

to present not feelings, but the objects which excite feelings, must have been very distinctly his aim at this period. And it is worth noticing, that though he lived at this time in the centre of the most distinguished young men of his University, his poems present but faint evidence of this. He seems to have deliberately abstained from any attempt to paint the actual human life about him, or to give a poetical form to such impressions of real life as he might have obtained from reading. No one who knows the men with whom he lived, or who has read his later poems, can doubt that the sympathies with human emotion, the noble views of human character and destiny, that distinguish his mature poems, must have then existed in the man; and we must therefore infer that he did not feel his mastery over the instruments of his art sufficient to justify him in delineating human life. His knowledge of the modes in which emotion and character manifest themselves, must have appeared to him too imperfect to attempt their exhibition in rhythmical forms—these forms being no mere conventional arrangement of words to please the ear, but the expression of the delight of the poet at the beauty and completeness of the pictures vividly present to his imagination; and in their highest symbolic value, representing the poet's insight into the moral meaning of life, and his vision of a perfect order and harmony in the universe,—of the triumph of good over evil. To attain skill in the employment of rhythmical forms,—to sing nobly and naturally,—to form a style capable of musically expressing his ideas, as ripening intellect

and enlarged experience should supply him with ideas demanding musical expression, may be set down as the aim, more or less conscious, of this first poetical series. Probably to the avoidance of subjects beyond his powers, to the careful elaboration of his style, the world may be indebted for the perfection of his later poems. Had he begun with *Balder* or *Festus*, he would not have afterwards produced *The Morte d'Arthur*, *The Gardener's Daughter*, *Locksley Hall*, and *In Memoriam*. *Mariana in the Moated Grange* marks the highest point of the first flight, and in that the power of the artist is shown, in the complete presentation of a limited and peculiar view of the subject, rather than in the ethical or poetical value of the conception.

Mr. Tennyson's second volume bears the date of 1833. It contains some poems which their author has not thought worthy of preservation, and some others which take their place among his collected poems, considerably altered. But characterised as a whole, in comparison with the first volume, it marks a surprising advance, both in conception and execution. *Mariana*, and perhaps *Recollections of the Arabian Nights*, are the only poems of the first series that would have had a chance of being remembered for their own merits, and they are both admirably executed, rather than interesting. But in the second volume, *The Miller's Daughter*, *Œnone*, *The Palace of Art*, *The May Queen*, and *The Lotos Eaters* would, even in their original forms, have been enduring memorials of a rare poetic faculty. In *The Miller's Daughter* and *The May Queen* the affections of our every-day life, and the scenery with which they associate themselves, become for the first time the subject of Mr. Tennyson's art; and we appreciate the important principle of treating landscape as dynamically related to emotion when we see it applied to feelings which powerfully affect us, and with whose action we are sufficiently familiar to sympathize. In the two *Marianas* this principle is carried thoroughly out, but under conditions which interfere with our hearty enjoyment of the poems. Partly, no doubt, the contemplation of unmixed pain that serves no disciplinal aim is painful, however exquisitely it may be delineated, and hardly consistent with the delight we expect from every work of art; but the absence from both the *Marianas* of any but the faintest traces of the previous story, and of any traits of individual character, has more to do with this want of popular interest. They are, as was said before, not women whose history and character we can realize sufficiently to care about them, but abstract types; and the consequence of this is, that the landscape element predominates too much. Instead of serving

simply to reflect and render legible the misery of the women, it becomes itself the principal object, and the women are lost in its details. Besides, we feel that no human life could possibly endure a loneliness and wretchedness so unmixed as are depicted, and that these pictures are not true because they leave out elements essential to the real drama, which they present in part. But in *The Miller's Daughter* there is a story which tells the leading incidents of a life,—there are real persons presented, with their distinguishing traits; and the scenery, though intimately blended with the life, and entering as an indispensable element in the story, because indissolubly connected with the memories of the speaker, becomes subordinate, and no longer overrides the human interest. And it is only in this way, when emotion is presented in connection with the incidents out of which it rises, and with the persons who experience it, and when the scenery is made to reflect, not simple emotion, but the emotion of distinct persons, that an interesting poem can be written, and the affections of the reader sincerely touched. So long as the emotion is presented without a distinct conception of the person experiencing it, and the cause why, and the scenery is presented through the medium of this abstract emotion, as it may be called, the skill of the artist may be admired, but he will not be a popular poet; and a poet who does not write at the heart of a people is no poet at all. *The Miller's Daughter* and *The May Queen* at once established Mr. Tennyson's capacity for becoming a popular poet, and made him one within a limited circle. Their charm consists in the real interest of lives moved by the simplest affections and the simplest enjoyments, and in the skill with which these lives are presented as complete dramas, though each poem is extended in time only through an ordinary conversation. It is in each case a life reviewed by the speaker under the emotion that belongs to a particular moment; and the golden calm that rests upon the one, and the sweet innocence that shines through the other, belong naturally to the circumstances under which the reminiscences are uttered. Nothing of truth is sacrificed to ideality, but such ideality as gives both unity of colouring throughout, and guides the selection of details, is the true result of the emotion of each speaker. Thus the charm of completeness, which is the aim of narrative, is united with the power over the sympathies possessed by the spontaneous outpouring of feeling; and a lyrical flow of emotion is made to hold in solution, as it were, the constituents of a drama or a novel.

But it must not be supposed, because these two poems have been contrasted with the *Marianas* and shown to have more

power over the affections, more of the elements necessary to popularity, that the *Marianas* are failures of the poet to work out his own intentions. Neither *Mariana* professes to be a *tale* of human passion, with its alternations of joy and sorrow. Had the excitement of pity, or any mere emotion, been the object of the poet, we must think him obtuse not to know that his mode of presenting the tale would but feebly answer his purpose. We see by *The Miller's Daughter* and the *May Queen* that he can move us to tears, or fill us with serene delight, if such were his object. But if we revert to the second Mariana, transported to an Italian landscape, we see her as in a picture, lovely in her lonely wretchedness; we see the landscape round her ministering torture to her heart and senses, that long for quiet sound and shadow. We go with her in her dream to her breezy mountain home,—we wake with her to the torturing glare of the blinding noon-day heat,—we breathe with her as she leans at evening on her balcony, while Hesper sheds divine solace on her soul, and coolness and soft distant sounds bring a semblance of repose. In that dream of home and of the past, in the recurrence of a kind of comfort in the cool evening, in her prayer to the Madonna, and even in the distinct picture of her beauty, we recognise the superiority to the first Mariana, and the growth of Mr. Tennyson's genius. But one touch of grief that should connect itself with a definite incident, or a person brought clearly before the mind, would excite more pity, more affection to her, and more indignation against her false lover. She would walk out of her frame, and become a woman with a history and with relations to the common world, and our emotional sympathies would at once flow forth towards her. At present it is the perceptive faculties that are occupied with her, which are thronged with images making up a picture. No doubt the picture is intelligible enough for the imagination of the reader to supply the history without difficulty in its general character, but the mind has no strong grasp of what is apprehended only in its general character; and the poem, as it stands before us, remains a beautiful picture, rather than an affecting love story, and this though it is the crisis of a thousand affecting love stories. If Mr. Tennyson had chosen to stamp that individuality of character and incident which gives its charm to life, and to the fiction which aims at presenting real life, we have evidence that he could, at this time, have done it. Instead of that he tells us no more of his Italian Mariana than if she were painted for us in a picture by Millais, except that the poem gives us changes of time and scenery as a compensation for that vividness of presentation

denied to words. It is the development from the painter to the poet,—from the man who can make beautiful pictures to the man who can present human life, with all its activities of noble thought and pure affection, and, in presenting it, can justify its being to the heart and reason, that marks Mr. Tennyson's poetic course.

But through the greater portion of the second volume the painter predominates. We have no poems to place by the side of *The Miller's Daughter* and *The May Queen*. *The Lady of Shalott*, founded on an incident in *King Arthur*, is so treated as to eliminate all the human interest of the original story, and the process gives us a being whose existence passes without emotion, without changes, without intelligible motive for living on, without hope or fear here or hereafter. Nothing remains but the faint shadow of humanity, from which life, and motion, and substance have departed. All this price to gain perfect serenity, and some new phase of being for the reflective faculty to make what it can of,—perhaps to cause our human heart to beat the stronger for reaction! Considered merely as a picture, *The Lady of Shalott* has a serene beauty, and clear landscape features, that only make one more angry that so much skill in presenting objects should be employed upon a subject that can only amuse the imagination.

The poem to which, in subsequent editions, the name of *Fatima* is given, cannot be charged with want of passion; but, like the *Marianas*, it leaves the reader too much to supply in the way of story and person. It would be doing it injustice to call it the concentrated essence of Byron's Gulnares, Zuleikas, *et id genus omne;* for Byron never reached any point near this 'withering might' of love. But as it stands, it is too fragmentary,—a mere study, though so finished as to make one long for the poem which should have developed it. One would think that Mr. Tennyson must have been smitten with a determinate aversion to popularity, and, at the same time, have resolved to show what a power of intense passionate expression he was master of, when he left such a poem without beginning, middle, or end. Perhaps, however, in his opinion, this overmastering Eastern passion, that, like a fever, dries up and exhausts mind and body, has no phases capable of forming into a story or drama. It may be the very essence of this type of love that it should not rise by degrees, by half-confidences, by all the pleasant stages of Western love, but burst forth at once into full consciousness, and know no changes but the fiercest extremes of tenderness and exhaustion. In that case, its true poetic expression would be given in the passionate utterance of desire strained to agony; and, be that

as it may, the effect of such passion, in morbidly heightening the nervous sensibility, and giving a painful intensity to all impressions on the senses, is indicated with marvellous force of imagination, and rendered into language and rhythm which pour forth like a flood of lava from a volcano in eruption.

The pre-eminence of the painter reappears in *Ænone*. If the poet's object had been to tell a moving story of love, and wrong, and grief, he would not have chosen for his heroine a mythological nymph, nor have thrown his incidents back to the siege of Troy, and among beings whose existence is no longer believed in. As little is his purpose, in treating Greek mythology, akin to Shelley's, who clothes in its forms a sentimental nature-philosophy, and a pantheistical worship. *Ænone* is more akin in spirit to *Endymion* and *Hyperion;* but its verse is more majestic, and its luxuriant pictorial richness more controlled by definite conception, more articulated by fine drawing, than even the latter and greater of Keats's two poems. Gorgeous mountain and figure painting stand here as the predominant aim as clearly as in any picture by Titian or Turner; only poetry will not lose her prerogative of speech, and will paint her mountains and her figures in a medium of passion to which the artist upon canvas vainly aspires. Round Ida and its valleys, round Troas and its windy citadel, Ænone can pour the enchantment of her memories of love and grief. To her can the naked goddesses—painted as Rubens could not paint them,—life, motion, and floating lights—utter celestial music, and grand thoughts ally themselves with splendid pictures. If the wish will force its way, that Greek mythology might be left at peace in its tomb, and that a harp so strung to passion and to thought should pour the spell of its music upon a theme in which the imagination should harmonize and interpret the life of the men and women about us, we can but answer, that the deeper music will yet beat itself out,—that this is but prelude, showing the artist's power and perfecting his hand.

The Lotos Eaters carries Tennyson's tendency to pure æstheticism to an extreme point. It is picture and music, and nothing more. 'The writer did not suppose he was writing *Hamlet*, or solving the riddle of the painful earth.' Nor must we go to the work with that demand upon it. If music and picture—the feelings of imaginary beings, in a pure region of imagination, perfectly presented in rhythmical language that takes the formative impulse of the feeling, as falling water does of the forces that draw it into a flashing curve—have no charm for any mind, that mind can find no interest in *The Lotos Eaters*. To attempt to treat it as an

allegory, which figures forth the tendency to abandon the battle of life, to retire from a fruitless, ever-renewed struggle, —to read it as we should read *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and look out for facts of actual experience which answer to its images, is as monstrous and perverse as it would be to test a proposition of geometry by its rhythm and imagery. A mood of feeling, of course, it represents, and feeling dependent on, and directed to distinct objects,—in this latter respect, alone, differing from music. We may, of course, too, apply the mood of feeling thus depicted to the real events of life, and translate it into the actual language of men under the influence of 'mild-eyed melancholy.' So we might with a sonata of Beethoven's,—but the application is ours, and not the composer's; and if we attempt to limit the composer to our interpretation, rather than give ourselves up to his free inspiration from a purely musical impulse, all we get by it is, generally, a very poor verbal poem, instead of a noble work that does not, however, belong to the region of articulate speech. It is, perhaps, because the companion poem of the *Hesperides* does not even represent a mood of feeling, as well as because it is far less perfect in execution, that it has been left out of succeeding editions.

It may be suggested that *The Palace of Art* contradicts what has been said of Mr. Tennyson's tendency to paint pictures rather than to dramatize life and its emotions. And had the conception of the poem been adequately worked out, it would have reached the highest point of view from which life can be surveyed. The poet himself declares it to be an allegory, and, therefore, to have an interest mainly ethical, to which, by the nature of the case, all mere pictorial or musical beauty is to be subordinate. But how has the conception been carried out? Has the poet's intention been adequately realized, or has the fully developed pictorial and rhythmical talent been too much for his less highly developed dramatic and philosophic power? No one can read the poem and fail to see that only half his intention has been completed; and that, in spite of himself, the pictorial and musical element has prevailed over the moral and philosophic aim. With the site, construction, and furniture of *The Soul's Palace*, he must be a fastidious critic who would not be highly delighted,—the finest ideal Strawberry Hill that ever poet's brain conceived. With the truth of the lesson, too, no moralist can quarrel. It is profoundly true that a mere artistic enjoyment of the universe will make no great soul permanently happy. To make the poem perfect, the process of the soul's growing discontent with, and final disgust at the beautiful objects with

which it has surrounded itself, should have been displayed and accounted for, since, as mere statement, it is a truism. If a real man has come to the conclusion that his happiness consists in perfect isolation from his fellow creatures in act and sympathy, in letting the world and his fellow men enter his thoughts solely as pictures to be enjoyed for their variety, one of two things happens to him,—either that his pictures cease to amuse him when his appetite for novelty is worn out, or arouse his sympathies for the men and women whose lives and thoughts they shadow forth,—his awe and adoration of the source of all this wondrous activity,—his desire to understand the meaning and purpose of it all. Mere variety, that does not succeed in exciting these feelings, soon wearies; for the infinite element in life is not the variety of things by which we are acted on, but the unfathomable personality of our own being; and it is just this personality which the soul in the poem is doing all he can to quench in himself. He is trying to live by the outward things about him, and by the enjoyment they afford to his intellect; while he ignores that relation to God and to his fellow beings, in the consciousness and acknowledgment of which spiritual life consists. When, then, his beautiful objects pall upon him, as his intellectual and perceptive craving is wearied, they become dead things, and loathsome in his eyes—a disgust at his life seizes him,—while he shrinks in horror from the prospective isolation of death. The soul that has not exercised itself in feelings which grow by what they feed on must experience inconceivable horror at the decay of its intellectual and perceptive activities, unless it contemplates annihilation. But the soul in *The Palace* has reasoned itself into a conviction of immortality, and the pride which in its case lay at the bottom of that conviction, becomes its own scourge. For immortality becomes blank endless isolation, not merely from sympathies, but from objects of interest,—one never-ceasing death in life. Scorn of himself is born of this gloom and misery—vain attempts to rally by recalling memories of past strength and enjoyment soon give way to fixed despair. Feeling himself wretched, the desire of pity comes upon him, and the fellow-feeling comes with the sense of the need of fellow-feeling. He sees that the wretched people whom he had despised were necessary to him,—he casts away his proud seclusion, abandons his life of intellect and enjoyment to mourn and work with the herd, if so be he may obtain pardon for his inhuman sin.

Something of this process is no doubt described in the poem, but not with sufficient fulness or clearness. As the mere statement of the law that the soul cannot live in isolation

is a truism, the chief interest of the poem should have been thrown upon the development of the law in operation; the reader should have been made to go along with the soul in its exultation, in its first start of doubtful suspicion, in its gradual perception of the horrors of its condition, in its slow but sure realization of its own wretchedness, in its prostration of self-abhorrence and remorse. A nobler allegory could not be conceived, or one more fitted to the age, and to the highest intellects of all ages. But it fails just where it ought to have been strongest; and what we have is a series of magnificent pictures in magnificent verse, followed, indeed, by a statement of the moral in very noble stanzas, but by no adequate dramatic presentation of the mode in which the great law of humanity works out its processes in the soul. What is subordinate in object not only fills more space—that were unimportant,—but in force of treatment, in interest, the furniture of *The Palace* quite surpasses the vindication of the moral law. Indeed, it has been profanely remarked that the poem resembles a *catalogue raisonnée*, richly illuminated, of the effects of a soul compelled for a time to quit its mansion, and wishing to dispose of its furniture by auction. Perhaps it would have been impossible adequately to impress the moral without descending altogether from the heights of allegory, and presenting a drama of actual human experience. The universal law would have been best shown in a particular case, and in connexion with an intelligible human life. But even under the conditions of the allegory more emphasis might and ought to have been given to the main end and purpose of the poem, and less, comparatively, to its machinery. Though many alterations have been made in subsequent editions, this main defect of structure has never been remedied.

With the publication of the Third Series, in 1842, Mr. Tennyson appears distinctly as the poet of his own age. His apprenticeship is over, his mastery over the instruments of his art is complete, and he employs it in either presenting the life of his contemporaries, the thoughts, incidents, and emotions of the nineteenth century in England, or in treating legend and history with reference to the moral and intellectual sympathies now active amongst us. In other words, he no longer writes poems for us that charm by their pictorial and rhythmical beauty, but, presenting modes of existence and feeling which are either altogether inhuman or imperfectly human, excite none of the interest that belongs to what reflects and interprets our own lives. Mermen, mermaids, sea fairies, Ladies of Shalott, Lotos Eaters, disappear from the scene; Adelines, Margarets, Eleanores, no longer come as

abstract types of character without speech, story, or personal relations, figured forth in abundance of similes but with none of the traits by which the mind apprehends individual men and women; Grecian nymphs no longer pour out their loves and griefs to their mother earth, and Grecian goddesses no longer interfere in the affairs of mortals, and shed the lustre of celestial presences on the mountain side. That in which we cannot believe, either ceases to be treated at all, or is treated as symbol and picture of what we know to be profoundly real. So far is this change from necessitating any narrowing of the poet's range of subjects, that legendary history, fairy fiction, Greek poetry, and trees endowed with human speech, blend in the procession with Egyptian fanatics, rapt nuns, English ladies, peasant girls, artists, lawyers, farmers,—in fact, a tolerably complete representation of the miscellaneous public of the present day; while the forms vary from epic fragments to the homeliest dialogue,—from the simplest utterance of emotion in a song to the highest lyrical allegory of a terrible and profound law of life. The poet looks upon a larger field than before, and what he looked on before he now sees with a more penetrating eye, a mind that apprehends wider and deeper relations. He paints more brilliantly and forcibly than ever, but his pictures speak to the heart and spirit as well as to the eye; his music is even richer and more charming in its melody, but it moves henceforth fraught with the feelings and ideas by which men and nations work out the divine purposes of their being. In some poems the artistic beauty seems given more for its own sake than for any moral that lies in the story, any ulterior meaning which it unfolds; but the noble pictures which the actions and persons of human beings furnish are themselves moral and interpretation; and in no poems more than in those which simply present the splendour and beauty of humanity, and of the material universe in which humanity works its work, does the poet fulfil his highest function.

The first poem in the Third Series is called *The Epic*, and contains a fragment on the death of King Arthur, read to the party assembled in a country house at Christmas. Set thus amidst the fire-side talk of Christmas Eve, *Morte d'Arthur* ceases to be a fragment of animated and picturesque epic story, and becomes the answer of a Christian poet to the querulous lamentation of the Christian ritualist and dogmatist over the decay of faith. The noble humanity and piety that shone in chivalry are not dead, he tells us, with King Arthur, though

> The sequel of to-day unsolders all
> The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
> Whereof this world holds record.

Excalibur, the mystic sword which Arthur wielded so long and so well, vanishes with him from the world, but the heavenly weapons wherewith men fight the good fight are still bestowed upon the heroes of the successive ages, differing in form and temper, but effective for the various work, and fitted to the hands that are to wield them. Not only has each age its new work to do, its new instruments and new men to do it, as matter of historical fact, but it must be so,—

> The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfils himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

The Arthur of the round-table is gone to fable-land; but the desire and hope that gave birth to the legends of chivalry yet live,—the dim prophecy that he will one day return and rule over Britain is ever accomplishing itself. What mean those Christmas bells that tell us yearly Christ is born? Do they lie? No! they blend with all noble legends that speak of man's great deeds, of his vaster aspirations, of his yet unaccomplished hopes. They remind us of the prophecy to which fact is tending, of the ideal after which the real is striving. To him whose heart is hopeful and brave, who will not be the slave of formulas, 'Arthur is come again, and cannot die,' is the burden of the world's song; 'Come again, and thrice as fair,' is heard in every change by which the thoughts of men are widened and their hearts enlarged; 'Come with all good things, and war shall be no more,' the strain that echoes clear in the distance, and most clear when the church bells ring in the Christmas morn. *Morte d'Arthur* is no mere story out of an old book, refurbished with modern ornaments, but a song of hope, a prophecy of the final triumph of good. Mr. Tennyson has, indeed, lavished upon the story all the resources of a genius eminently pictorial, and trained to complete mastery over language and metre. He might unquestionably have silenced the parson in a more simple and direct fashion, by which he would not only have deprived us of a noble piece of painting, but have missed a poetic and profoundly true method of looking at national legends. The poem justifies itself, by its finished excellence, as a work of art, but it is spiritualized and raised above merely pictorial and dramatic beauty by its setting, and the poet's nineteenth-century point of view.

Mr. Tennyson makes the supposed author, Everard Hall, talk of his fragment as

> Faint Homeric echoes, nothing worth,—
> Mere chaff and draff, much better burnt.

They are rather Virgilian than Homeric echoes; elaborate and stately, not *naïve* and eager to tell their story; rich in pictorial detail; carefully studied; conscious of their own art; more anxious for beauty of workmanship than interest of action. But since John Dryden died, no English poet has written verse so noble, so sonorous, of such sustained majesty and might; no English poet has brought pictures so clear and splendid before the eye by the power of single epithets and phrases; and Dryden himself never wrote a poem so free from careless lines, unmeaning words, and conventional epithets. The fragment bursts upon us like the blended blast and wail of the trumpets of pursuing and retreating hosts: a whole day's alternate victory and defeat, a series of single combats, the death of the leaders one by one, the drawing off of the armies at sunset, King Arthur alone and wounded on the field, the coming on of night and the rising of the moon, the approach of King Arthur's last captain to bear him to a place of shelter, are pictured to the imagination in the few vigorous lines that commence the poem.

> So all day long the noise of battle rolled
> Among the mountains by the winter sea;
> Until King Arthur's table, man by man,
> Had fall'n in Lyonness about their Lord,
> King Arthur: then, because his wound was deep,
> The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
> Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
> And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
> A broken chancel with a broken cross,
> That stood on a dark strait of barren land.
> On one side lay the ocean, and on one
> Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

That phrase, 'a great water,' has probably often been ridiculed as affected phraseology for 'a great lake;' but it is an instance of the intense presentative power of Mr. Tennyson's genius. It precisely marks the appearance of a large lake outspread and taken in at one glance from a high ground. Had 'a great lake' been substituted for it, the phrase would have needed to be translated by the mind into water of a certain shape and size, before the picture was realized by the imagination. 'A great *lake*' is, in fact, one degree removed from the sensuous to the logical,—from the individual appearance to the generic name, and is, therefore, less poetic and pictorial.

With what distinctness, with what force and conciseness of language, is the whole scene of the churchyard, with its associations, brought before the mind: its ancestral relics, the ruins of the chapel, the piercing cold of the night-wind edged

with sea-salt, the sharp rocks down which the path to the lake descends:—

> So saying, from the ruined shrine he stept,
> And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
> Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
> Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
> Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down,
> By zig-zag paths, and juts of pointed rock,
> Came on the shining levels of the lake.

The classical *æquora* may have suggested the 'shining *levels;*' but there is a deeper reason for the change of phrase, for the 'great water,' as seen from the high ground, becomes a series of flashing surfaces when Sir Bedivere looks along it from its margin.

This pictorial reality is kept up through the poem. Excalibur does not merely sparkle in the moonlight with its jewelled hilt, but

> The winter moon,
> Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, *ran forth*
> *And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt.*

Sir Bedivere does not doubt whether he shall throw the sword, but stands

> This way and that, dividing the swift mind,
> In act to throw.

None the worse a phrase for recalling the Virgilian 'Atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc dividit illuc.' The 'many-knotted waterflags' are not brought in simply to hide Excalibur, they must add their life to the picture, and

> Whistle stiff and dry about the marge.

Everywhere the phenomenon is presented with the utmost vividness and truth of appearance, with the utmost fullness of sense-impressing qualities; sensuous concrete language takes the place of our common speech, abounding in logical generalizations and names of classes. The mind is kept awake and in full activity by the presence of those realities which are smothered and hidden by the conventional symbols through which ordinary narrative is carried on. The most delicate distinctions of phenomena are noted that serve as an aid to our complete realization of the scene. Sir Bedivere hears

> The ripple *washing in the reeds,*

and

> The wild water *lapping on the crags;*

the two phrases marking exactly the difference of sound pro-

duced by water swelling up against a permeable or impermeable barrier.

How thoroughly Shakspearian is King Arthur's lament,

> Woe is me!
> Authority forgets a dying king,
> Laid widowed of the power in his eye
> That bowed the will,

where the personification assists the imagination without distressing the understanding, as when dwelt upon, and expanded in detail; deepening the impressiveness of the sentiment by giving along with a true thought a grand picture,—just such a passing flash of impassioned rhetoric as would become the highest oratory, and thrill through the hearts of a great assembly.

In the description of Sir Bedivere's last and successful attempt to throw the sword into the lake, every word tells of rapid, agitated, determined action, refusing to dally with the temptation that had twice overcome him:—

> Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran
> And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
> Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,
> And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
> Made lightnings in the splendour of the moon,
> And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
> Shot like a streamer of the northern morn
> Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
> By night, with noises of the northern sea.
> So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur.

A series of brilliant effects is hit off in those two words, 'made lightnings.' 'Whirl'd in an arch,' is a splendid instance of sound answering to sense, which the older critics made so much of; the additional syllable which breaks the measure, and necessitates an increased rapidity of utterance, seeming to express to the ear the rush of the sword up its parabolic curve. And with what lavish richness of presentative power is the boreal aurora, the collision, the crash, and the thunder of the meeting icebergs, brought before the eye. An inferior artist would have shouted through a page, and emptied a whole pallet of colour, without any result but interrupting his narrative, where Tennyson in three lines strikingly illustrates the fact he has to tell,—associates it impressively with one of nature's grandest phenomena, and gives a complete picture of this phenomenon besides.

How dramatic and striking is King Arthur's sudden exclamation on Sir Bedivere's return:—

> Now see I by thine eyes that this is done;

how wonderfully true of a dying man, the

> Looking wistfully, with wide blue eye,
> As in a picture;

how pictorial and minutely attentive to the facts of appearance,—

> But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
> Clothed with his breath, and looking as he walked
> Larger than human on the frozen hills;

how rapid and eager the haste of movement in reply to the King's 'Quick, quick!'—

> He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
> Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
> Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
> And barren chasms, and all to left and right
> The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
> His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
> Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels;

do we not seem to burst from the narrow steep path down the ravine, whose tall precipitous sides hide the sky and the broad landscape from sight, and come out in a moment upon

> The level lake
> And the long glories of the winter moon?

In some over-fastidious moods, one might be inclined to charge

> A cry that *shivered* to the *tingling* stars

with a touch of that exaggeration which belongs to the 'spasmodic school;' but the cry comes from a company of spirits, amid mountains whose natural power of echo is heightened by the silence of night, the clearness of the winter air, and the hardening effect of frost. Such a cry at such a time, and in such a place, would thrill from rock to rock, from summit to summit, till it seemed to pierce the sky in a hurtling storm of multitudinous arrowy sounds, and die away in infinitely distant pulsations among the stars. In the following lines, where the agony of lamentation is compared to

> A wind that shrills
> All night in a waste land, *where no one comes*
> *Or hath come since the making of the world,*—

the passage italicised may seem at first to add nothing to the force of the comparison, as the shrillness of the wind would not be greater in an uninhabited place than anywhere else in open ground. But the mournfulness of the feeling a man would experience in such a place, from the sense of utter isolation and sterility, is blended with the naturally sad wail of the

wind over a wide waste, and the addition thus becomes no mere completion of a thought of which only part is wanted for the illustration—though that were allowable enough, according to ordinary poetic usage,—but gives a heightening of sentiment without which the illustration itself would be incomplete and less impressive.

Magnificent similes do not make poetry, but they are among its most effective means of filling the mind of the reader with the actual grandeur and pathos of the particular scene presented. Where the poet seizes not upon some mere superficial resemblance that draws the fancy between two objects essentially different in the general feeling they excite, but brings in a phenomenon of nature which excites feelings analogous to those belonging to the event or scene he is narrating, the use of simile and figure not only enables him to avoid encumbering his narrative by detail, and epithet, and general terms otherwise necessary to bring his object before the mind, but associates that object at once and spontaneously with the feelings belonging to the illustrating phenomenon—an effect which could not be produced apart from this device except by long drawn-out reflections. Simile and figure may be regarded as a natural short-hand, which substitutes well-known things for the unknown qualities of whatever has to be described, and which therefore gives the general effect of the things to be described without necessitating the task of minute description. This is exactly the reverse of the use made of these forms of speech by the man of wit, who intentionally selects for his illustration some merely accidental and often merely verbal resemblance between two things essentially different in themselves and in the feelings they excite. But the poet, in his impassioned or serious moods, seizes not on resemblances but true analogies; and they at once adorn his poetry with impressive pictures, and convey his meaning with force and brevity. The passage in which Arthur is described as dying in the arms of the mourning queen, is a fine instance of a poetical use of simile and figure. The moon fading in the early morning, the dazzling brightness of the rising sun, the shattered column, the glancing flight of a shooting star, bring before the mind not only the dying king, pale and bleeding, but the contrast between his present weakness and the glory and triumphs of his chivalrous and brilliant life. In a few lines his whole story is told: it is not merely a dying warrior who lies before us, but the strength, the state, the splendour, and enjoyment of his past life, flash before the imagination, and deepen the sadness and humiliation of his defeat and death.

> For all his face was white
> And colourless, and like the wither'd moon
> Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
> And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops
> Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
> That made his forehead like a rising sun
> High from the däis-throne—were parch'd with dust;
> Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
> Mix'd with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
> So like a shattered column lay the king;
> Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
> From spur to plume a star of tournament,
> Shot through the lists at Camelot, and charged
> Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Let not the purpose of this analysis of detail be misunderstood. Fine phrases and fine passages do not make a fine poem; but they do show that unflagging activity of imagination, which operating on a finely-constructed whole, change a well-proportioned frame-work into a temple of carved stones, every one of which is instinct with life and thought,—where not only the *coup d'œil* strikes, but the closest and most minute examination only opens fresh sources of wonder and enjoyment. In many poems that possess merit equal to *Morte d'Arthur*, it would be impossible to pick out single passages or lines that would be beautiful or striking, when taken from their context. *Dora* is an instance. But this examination of details proves that where Mr. Tennyson is employed upon a poem which consists of a series of actions admitting of splendid pictorial presentment, being in their own nature pictorially splendid, his pictures are drawn with a vigorous hand, and coloured to the life; and that no stroke of his brush is without meaning. And this has been done, not because it is supposed that professed admirers of Mr. Tennyson's poetry needed help to point out the just grounds of their admiration, but because many persons say they cannot see why others do so highly admire Mr. Tennyson; and to show them that a hasty, careless glance over his verses—such as they give to a leader in a newspaper, or even less attentive and interested,—is not precisely the way to arrive at the enjoyment of a poet in whom every word is the result of intense activity and concentration of the imagination, controlled by cultivated taste, and trained to a rare mastery over language and metre.

The group of poems founded on legendary history, of which *Morte d'Arthur* is the most important, consists, besides, of *Godiva*, *St. Simeon Stylites*, *Ulysses*, *St. Agnes*, and *Sir Galahad*. *Godiva* would have yielded to analysis results similar to those we have obtained from *Morte d'Arthur*, resembling that poem

in pictorial beauty and vivid dramatic presentation. A virginal purity, a spirit of chivalrous reverence for womanhood and self-sacrifice, veils and softens as with a halo of glory the figure of the 'woman of a thousand summers back,' as 'she rode forth clothed on with chastity.' Though compelled to pass the poem without notice of its details, we cannot but direct the attention of our readers to the intense imaginative reality of that passage in which the feelings of Godiva, as she rides through the streets, are transferred to the material objects by which she is surrounded:—

> The deep air listened round her as she rode,
> And all the low wind hardly breathed for fear.
> The little wide-mouthed heads upon the spout
> Had cunning eyes to see, &c.

And again in the same spirit, subordinating the truth of literal fact to the higher dramatic truth of passion:—

> And all at once,
> With twelve great shocks of sound, the *shameless* noon
> Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers,
> One after one.

The other four poems of the group aim at presenting types of character, and not at narrative of action. They take the form of speeches uttered on occasions which adequately represent the essential characteristics of the life of the speaker. The habitual selection of this form by Mr. Tennyson is one among many indications of the intensity of his imagination. It enables him to present in the shortest compass the essentials of his subject without the intervention of any commonplace machinery, but it makes a demand upon the imaginative resources of his readers, which goes some way to explain why many persons who enjoy certain kinds of poetry are utterly unable to appreciate his. Each of these four poems contains implicitly the story of a life and the exhibition of a well-marked type of character. We cannot pause to dwell upon the force and truth of the drawing in each case, but the group is important, as indicating the versatility of Mr. Tennyson's genius, his catholicity of imaginative apprehension, and his command over the elements of the most widely differing characters. *St. Simeon Stylites* proves that it is from no want of power to paint the horrible and the grotesque that Mr. Tennyson abstains as a rule from such subjects. And *St. Agnes* is the more remarkable as showing a hearty appreciation of the purer form of asceticism in a poet whose characteristic excellence lies in the portrayal of tender sentiment and voluptuous passion, upheld and refined by a stainless purity.

We pass on to the love-poems, and in them we find the

same variety of treatment, the same avoidance of repetition, just noticed in the legendary group.

The Gardener's Daughter, with its rich luxuriance of imagery, its warmth of passion, its magnificence of phrase, its *abandon* of sentiment, is not more essentially different from the severely dramatic simplicity and pathos of *Dora*, than the calm retrospect and peaceful affection of *The Miller's Daughter* is from the stormy current of slighted passion and fierce scorn that rushes wildly on through *Locksley Hall*, to find its haven in grand visions of progress and the excitement of enterprise. The playful fancy of the *Talking Oak* touches the airy treble of a scale of which *Love and Duty* sound the deepest and most solemn chords. The rustic grace and sweetness of *The May Queen* contrast sharply with the rude force and indignant sarcasm of *Lady Clara Vere de Vere;* while the conversational idylls blend with the level tones of ordinary conversation touches of natural beauty and flashes of elevated thought, which raise them to the rank of poems, and recal what are among the happier hours of our modern life,—those hours with cultivated and genial friends, in which the cares of the world are shaken off, and the best memories of the past, the noblest aspirations, the gentlest feelings, revive amid mountain and lake, for the votaries of ambition, science, or business.

Then, as to form, we find narrative, dialogue, soliloquy, and direct address. We have blank verse that ranges through all the scale of feeling, from the exquisitely rhythmical, full, majestic, down to the just accented strain, that may fairly represent genial and animated conversation; we have lyric measures that flow softly on like a quiet streamlet, as in the *Miller's Daughter;* go straight and fierce to their mark like arrows of scorn, as in *Lady Clara Vere de Vere;* float gaily or sadly on in sweet calm to the music of a young girl's life and early death, as in the three strains of *The May Queen;* dash on in thunder and in storm, sweeping vast spaces, gathering in lurid gloom, or clearing in sudden flashes, impetuous hurricane of thick clouds, or dazzling brightness of tropic summer, as in *Locksley Hall.* No poet but Goethe has, in our day, swept a lyre of such varied range, with so perfect a command of every key. Moreover, none of these poems belong to the class called 'occasional.' They all have a construction which tells a complete story—often the story of a life. Some touch, frequently slight, lets us into the previous stages of the personal history, and throws forward a clear light upon the future career. The passions are treated, not merely as giving rise to striking incidents, but as exercising a permanent influence on the character and destiny. Though for the most part

lyrical in form, the poems rise, thus, to the full significance of dramas, as has been explained in respect to *The Miller's Daughter;* and similar remarks might be truly applied to all the principal poems. These qualities of variety and completeness give Mr. Tennyson a claim to a place among great poets, which the form and length of his compositions somewhat interfere with in the first rough estimate of a public inclined to set 'the how much before the how.' We can only indicate them by selected instances; but the careful analysis of any one of his poems would lead to the same conclusions.

The love story to which *The Gardener's Daughter* supplies a title and a central figure, takes the form of a narrative from the lips of the man who wooed and won the maiden for a wife. By this selection of a speaker, who is made to dwell on the blissful recollections of early love, the dramatic colouring throughout is maintained at a glowing tone, without being exposed to the charge of exaggeration. The minutest incidents, the changing lights and shades of feeling, belonging to such a period, are stamped indelibly in the memory, and never lose their first fresh charm and interest. To raise the colouring still higher, and justify a more elaborately picturesque treatment, a fonder dwelling upon every detail of natural beauty then noted with the seeing eye of a loving heart, the speaker is not only a lover, but a painter. The motive is thus admirably chosen for treatment at once impassioned and pictorial, for the minutest detail of feeling and circumstance, for the freest play of an imaginative sympathy with nature, and the rich hues that inward joy sheds over the outward world. But Mr. Tennyson is the last man to forget that law of reserve which binds the lover—the law which a recent writer has so well expressed, when he says—

> Not to unveil before the gaze
> Of an imperfect sympathy,
> In aught we are, is the sweet praise
> And the main sum of modesty.
> Love blabbed of is a great decline;
> A careless world unsanctions sense;
> But he who casts heaven's truth to swine
> Consummates all incontinence.*

The rapture delineated in *The Gardener's Daughter* is the rapture of hope when the eyes and heart first feel the loveliness of a woman, and all nature shines in the wedding garment, which is but the reflection of the lover's inward life. No babbling of lover's secrets is here; no laying

* *The Angel in the House.*

bare to a third person of what is perfectly befitting, graceful, beautiful, and pure when done and said at love's instinctive bidding, but becomes the contrary of these when spoken of to others, or dwelt on in cool, reflective moments. The highest emotion is sacred, only revealed to the most perfect sympathy—that of the person who excites and shares it; and even that revelation must be inarticulate, of act, of look—not of speech. There is profound beauty and truth in the allegory that represents love as a blind child; he knows no wrong, is unconscious of what he does,—trusting to a divine instinct. The speaker in *The Gardener's Daughter* holds fast to this law. He paints the courtship, not the marriage; speaks of his heart's idol as the star that shone upon his course, the sun that lighted his day; as the goddess, ere yet she stepped from her ambrosial cloud-pedestal, and blessed his life with joys too sacred for the common ear. It is the beauty that he wooed, not the wife that he won, that he unveils for the listener to his tale. And as if even this were too much,—as if it were a kind of profanation to utter even these preludes of a life-blessedness to one who might, the moment after, look upon the actual woman who was their object, the speaker tells us that she has passed from earth and mortal taint,—that no second love has confused her image; but long years of lonely widowhood have only softened and hallowed it in his heart. As he speaks, he is standing before her veiled portrait, and, raising the veil, he says—

> Behold her there,
> As I beheld her ere she knew my heart,
> My first, last love; the idol of my youth,
> The darling of my manhood, and alas!
> Now the most blessed memory of mine age.

And thus, by this slight touch, what would have been merely a charmingly told love story, becomes, in fact, a story of a life sustained by love to the end, as it was in its youth brightened and enriched by love. The single phase of passion and of fortune is not only worked out to its crisis, so as to satisfy the artistic sense of completeness, but the value and influence of that single phase is shown as spreading through to the end of life, and the feeling that demands an eternal meaning and purpose in each stage of life is fully satisfied.

It would be impossible in any notice of Mr. Tennyson to be satisfied with a survey of the plan of what may fairly be called his most popular poem. He, indeed, constructs his poems poetically, and certainly cannot be ranked with the mere exquisite worker of detail; but all his detail is so exquisite in his finer poems, that it would be as hopeless to

attempt to convey a true impression of them without exhibiting this detail in characteristic passages, as it would be to make a person feel all the subtle and penetrating grace and sweetness of a Raffaelle Madonna by description, or to transfuse into words the glory and power of Titian's colours. After all that philosophical critics have talked of organic unity, and such-like hard phrases, since Coleridge influenced English criticism, and allowing all the importance that belongs to the facts expressed, or intended to be expressed, by the phrases, it must be admitted that the finest construction would produce little effect in poetry without fine details; and that where the genius for producing these exists, the art or instinct which combines them will seldom be wanting when the poet is mature. The real truth is, that what is often called fine detail is nothing but tawdry ornament,—the feeble or vehement effort to say fine things without having fine thoughts,—to utter raptures that are insincere and unreal, inasmuch as the imaginative power to summon up the beautiful objects supposed to justify the rapture is wanting, and the would-be poet has before him merely the general conceptions of beautiful objects, to which he applies, consequently, mere general conventional phrases. Mr. Tennyson's phrases, on the contrary, are pictures; and his rhythm the natural music of a mind rejoicing in the beauty of the pictures that flow in ordered continuity and fullness before him. The unflagging activity of this pictorial power is manifested frequently in Mr. Tennyson's poems, by the slightest change from the ordinary phrase, as has been noticed in *Morte d'Arthur*. Here, again, in *The Gardener's Daughter*,—

> My Eustace might have sat for Hercules—
> So muscular he *spread*, so broad of breast,—

where the *spread* gives not the mere statement of a fact, but its actual appearance; the space fills before the eye with the bulky frame of the man, as we look.

In describing the locality of the garden, Mr. Tennyson fills the mind with the realities of the place. We know the distance from the city by hearing the funeral and marriage bells and the clanging of the minster clock, borne upon the wind; by looking out along a league of grass. The nature of the country and the time of year are given in the slow, broad stream, with its floating lilies, its pleasure skiffs, and its barges; in the rich grass meadows with their pasturing cattle, and their low-hanging lime trees in flower, humming with winged life. And to complete the picture thus presented, the extreme distance is filled by the three-arched bridge, with the minster towers rising above it—

Not wholly in the busy world, nor quite
Beyond it, blooms the garden that I love.
News from the humming city comes to it
In sound of funeral or of marriage-bells;
And, sitting muffled in dark leaves, you hear
The windy clanging of the minster clock;
Although between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow broad stream,
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, brows'd by deep-udder'd kine,
And all about the large lime feathers low,
The lime a summer home of murmurous wings.

A landscape by Constable or De Wint would not bring the scene more clearly before the eye, or with more of the quiet truth of happy, but unimpassioned observation. But it is the high prerogative of poetry that she can throw over nature the 'wedding garment or the shroud,' and exhibit landscape as it is coloured by emotion. It would be rash to assert perfection of anything human; but the following description of a country walk on a May morning, under the influence of the premonition of a first passion, before the subjective excitement is determined to and concentrated upon its proper object, approaches that limit. Since

Adam first
Embraced his Eve, in happy hour,

love was ever the great ideal artist, at whose touch

Every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud in flower;

but he never painted a more glowing picture of a mind full of the bliss that is half-sister to desire, or of a nature reflecting the bliss in a thousand beautiful sights and sounds than this:—

And sure this orbit of the memory folds
For ever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery squares,
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one large cloud
Drew downward: but all else of Heaven was pure
Up to the Sun, and May from verge to verge,
And May with me from head to heel. And now,
As though 'twere yesterday, as though it were
The hour just flown, that morn with all its sound,
(For those old Mays had thrice the life of these,)

Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot to graze,
And, where the hedge-row cuts the pathway, stood,
Leaning his horns into the neighbour field,
And lowing to his fellows. From the woods
Came voices of the well-contented doves,
The lark could scarce get out his notes for joy,
But shook his song together as he near'd
His happy home, the ground. To left and right,
The cuckoo told his name to all the hills;
The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
The redcap whistled; and the nightingale
Sang loud, as though he were the bird of day.

We have minute touches, bringing out common objects with a passing glory that catches without chaining the attention, as well as those finished pictures upon which the mind dwells with a fixed delight of contemplation; touches that charm us with their truth, and help to mark the whole scene in its distinction of season and weather. Here are two from a crowd of such. From the lilac in crowded bloom

One warm gust, full-fed with perfume, blew
Beyond us, as we entered in the cool.
* * * * *
In the midst
A cedar spread his dark-green layer of shade.
The garden glasses shone, and momently
The twinkling laurels scattered silver lights;

where the epithet *silver* admirably expresses the metallic glitter of the laurel leaves in the sun, compared with the deader green of ordinary foliage.

'The last night's gale,' which had blown the rose-tree across the walk, may have been introduced mainly to give Rose a graceful occupation, and to justify a charming picture. But even if that were its main purpose, it no less contributes a fact which accounts for the marvellous transparency of the May morning, the clearness of the atmosphere shedding rapture through the veins and hearts of all living things. Applied to most poets, such an observation would savour of over-refining, but Tennyson's never-aimless minuteness justifies it.

In the picture of Rose which follows, Mr. Tennyson has, with the true instinct of genius, avoided attempting to paint in words a beautiful human face, while he preserves dramatic propriety in not making a lover at the first glance master the expression of the countenance he afterwards knows in all its meanings. The painter-lover would be at once attracted to the picturesque attitude, general effect of dress, light and shade, the contour of the figure, and the bright points of colour—

One arm aloft,
Gown'd in pure white, that fitted to the shape—
Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.
A single stream of all her soft brown hair
Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the flowers
Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering
Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist—
Ah, happy shade—and still went wavering down,
But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might have danced
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
And mix'd with shadows of the common ground!
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe-bloom,
And doubled his own warmth against her lips,
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old man young.

With what exquisite feeling is the progress of the love associated with the imagery of the garden in which the loved one 'hoarded in herself, grew, seldom seen,'

The daughters of the year,
One after one, thro' that still garden pass'd:
Each garlanded with her peculiar flower
Danced into light, and died into the shade;
And each in passing touch'd with some new grace
Or seem'd to touch her, so that day by day,
Like one that never can be wholly known,
Her beauty grew;

and in that line, 'like one that never can be wholly known,' is revealed one exhaustless charm in all our true personal relations. Things, as things, soon weary us, because we soon know all we can ever know about them; persons are ever new, ever unfolding to us something unexpected, as they become dearer to us, and we look at them with eyes opened by sympathy and affection. Only the view of the universe, as a revelation of a personal being, supplies to outward objects exhaustless variety and interest.

The law of reserve which rules this poem has been already alluded to. It requires neither art nor genius to raise emotion of a low kind in a reader, if a writer has no reserve. The mind is sufficiently awake in all of us to realize pictures that appeal to the sensual passions; and a writer has no more difficulty in being powerful, if he give himself the licence of some poetry, than he has in being witty, if he copy Swift's unbridled profanity and beastliness. Mr. Tennyson's glory is to have portrayed passion with a feminine purity,—to have spiritualized the voluptuousness of the senses and the imagina-

tion by a manly reverence for woman's worth, and a clear intuition of 'the perfect law of liberty' through which the true humanity develops itself in the form and condition of an animal nature. He religiously observes the sanctities of love, and in graceful pictures lays down the law which he respects:—

> Would you learn at full
> How passion rose thro' circumstantial grades
> Beyond all grades develop'd? and indeed
> I had not staid so long to tell you all,
> But while I mused came Memory with sad eyes,
> Holding the folded annals of my youth;
> And while I mused, Love with knit brows went by,
> And with a flying finger swept my lips,
> And spake, 'Be wise: not easily forgiven
> Are those, who setting wide the doors, that bar
> The secret bridal chambers of the heart,
> Let in the day.' Here, then, my words have end.

And here must end our remarks upon *The Gardener's Daughter*. We can remember no love story that can be placed beside it in all its harmonious combination of excellences. Passion may have been dramatised more intensely; a subtle grace of sentiment, a charm of evanescent fragrance, may be felt more in some of Shelley's lyrics, and in some of Mr. Tennyson's own; character may certainly be given with more force of individuality; and unquestionably a story more exciting in its incidents has often been told by novelist and poet: but for its delineation of the first and last love of a happy man, whose moral nature has known nothing of conflicts with itself, and whose mind has been kept healthy by the delightful occupation of the painter; for its vivid descriptions of nature in some of her loveliest aspects; for the sense of perfect enjoyment that makes the verse flow on as a full stream through a rich meadow-land, and for the touching softening of the tone as the speaker tells of the present as a calm resting-place between a blessed memory and a blessed hope, it stands unrivalled in English literature. And yet it never deviates from the familiar path of our English daily life, and is just a simple picture of that life as a joyous heart and warm affection may make it for any of us.

The forms of poetry which Mr. Tennyson adopts are not capable of interpreting the more complex moral phenomena. To show that evil natures and evil actions have their appointed work in the world,

> That somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill,
> To pangs of nature, sins of will,
> Defects of doubt and taints of blood,—

will, in most cases, require a more complex machinery of interacting events and characters than he puts in operation. Beautiful actions and beautiful characters are their own interpretation. We need ask no questions as to the motive and ground of their existence, as to the part they bear in the harmonies of the universe. But to throw the faintest light of hope upon the lives and destinies of men and women who seem to be born only to cause suffering to themselves and others, to grow worse as they grow older, and to harden under the discipline of the moral laws of the universe, the mind must look far back into the determining causes of character and action, far forward into their remote results, and far round upon the society in which they develop themselves, and upon which they are exerting a constant modifying power, through its interests and sympathies. Even the widest glance forward, backward, and around, will fail often to detect one clue to the mystery of evil; and faith can only throw herself

> Upon the world's great altar stairs,
> That slope through darkness up to God.

So far, however, as the problem can be solved poetically—by exhibiting, that is, the real relations of good and evil in particular cases, and their actual connexion with each other as cause and effect, so as to vindicate at once the eternal law of right and the goodness of God with sufficient clearness to justify the expression of the poet's view of the world in a rhythmical form, the drama or the epic will alone satisfy the necessities of the case. The lyric poet may indeed assert in glowing strains his own conviction of the ultimate solution as a general truth, or he may present his view of the working of any great moral laws in lyric allegories, like *The Palace of Art* or *The Vision of Sin:* but no machinery short of the drama or epic will enable him to solve practically, and to the conviction of his readers, the darker problems of human life. And Mr. Tennyson abstains, as a rule, from touching any actions of human beings that are not, so to speak, their own vindication, and which do not at once commend themselves to the sympathy and conscience by their own gracefulness, beauty, or nobility, the happiness, the gentleness, the vitality of mind and heart, the strength and courage of will they exhibit.

This, however, in a world where suffering and sorrow are among the appointed means of discipline for the good as well as among the punishments of the bad, leaves still scope enough for poetry of a severer character than the exquisite and happy love-story we have been commenting upon. In *Dora* and *Love and Duty* the problem the poet attempts to solve is not to show how the eternal law of right vindicates itself against

man's self-will and self-indulgence, but how the goodness of God vindicates itself against man's self-sacrifice in behalf of the right. If such vindication were impossible in the typical instances selected, the subjects would be unfit for poetic treatment. Suffering, unredeemed by its effects, may be a proper subject for the awe-struck meditations of any man; but to represent it under rhythmical forms which are symbolical of emotion flowing musically forth from a heart rejoicing in its own thoughts about the objects present to it, would be just mockery. It is only Nero that fiddles when Rome is burning. The true poet must have seen the final issue in good of the struggle he portrays, even though but in a faint and hazy glimpse. And Mr. Tennyson habitually observes this law. Even poor, perverted Simeon Stylites has glimpses of his mistake; his wretched, addled brain is clouded, but the poem closes with a breaking up of the clouds. And scarcely any other of Mr. Tennyson's poems is open to the faintest suspicion of portraying emotion merely for its dramatic interest. In *Dora* and *Love and Duty* the suffering is felt through every nerve. The simple, unconscious pathos of the one, and the high-wrought reflective passion of the other, meet in this expression of a genuine grief. A three-volume novel could not impress the essential characteristics of each tale with more vividness than the brief poems, in which the incidents are boldly sketched in outline, and the crises of the passion struck off with a rapid and masterly force of hand. But in both poems, when the battle has been fought, the sharp agony passed, and all pretence of conventional consolation abandoned, the peace that comes of victory over self shines clearly down upon the hearts of the victims, and the striking drama, the pathetic tale, points forward to a life purified, strengthened, and even softened by the conflict. As a mere tale, *Dora* might have ended with the reconciliation; it is the higher instinct of the moral teacher that leads Mr. Tennyson to add—

> So those four abode
> Within one house together; and as years
> Went forward, Mary took another mate;
> But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

And it is not the love that

> Sits brooding on the ruins of a life,
> Nightmare of youth, the spectre of himself,

that prompts the speaker in *Love and Duty* to close his passionate recollections with a strain of exquisite sensibility to external beauty and softened visions of the future of his lost mistress:—

Live—yet live,—
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, knowing all
Life needs for life is possible to will—
Live happy! tend thy flowers: be tended by
My blessing! should my shadow cross thy thoughts
Too sadly for their peace, so put it back
For calmer hours in memory's darkest hold;
If unforgotten! should it cross thy dreams,
So might it come like one that looks content,
With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
And point thee forward to a distant light,
Or seem to lift a burthen from thy heart
And leave thee freër, till thou wake refresh'd,
Then when the first low matin-chirp hath grown
Full quire, and morning driv'n her plow of pearl
Far furrowing into light the mounded rack,
Beyond the fair green field and eastern sea.

In *Locksley Hall* we pass to a poem of a widely different strain. It is against the fickleness of a woman, not against circumstances which leave her image pure and beautiful in the memory, that the speaker in *Locksley Hall* has to find a resource. And he finds it in the excitement of enterprise and action, in glowing anticipations of progress for the human race. He not merely recovers his sympathy with his fellow men, and his interest in life, which had been paralysed by the unworthiness of her who represented for him all that was beautiful and good in life,—but he recovers it on higher and firmer ground. What he lost was a world that reflected his own unclouded enjoyment, his buoyant ardour and high spirits; a world appreciated mainly in its capacity for affording variety to his perceptive activity and scope for his unflagging energies; a world of which he himself, with his pleasures and his ambitions, was the centre. What he gains is a world that is fulfilling a divine purpose, beside which his personal enjoyments are infinitely unimportant, but in aiding and apprehending which his true blessedness is purified and deepened; a world in which he is infinitely small and insignificant, but greater in his brotherhood with the race which is evolving 'the idea of humanity' than in any possible grandeur of his own. The poem has been called 'morbid,' a phrase that has acquired a perfectly new meaning of late years, and is made to include all works of art, and all views of life that are coloured by other than comfortable feelings. If *Locksley Hall*, as a whole, is morbid, then it is morbid to represent a young man rising above an early disappointment in love, and coming out from it stronger, less sensitive, more sinewed for action.

What has led certain critics to call the poem morbid is, of

course, that the speaker's judgment of his age, in the earlier part, is coloured by his private wrong and grief. But it is not morbid, on the contrary, it is perfectly natural and right that outrages on the affections should disturb the calmness of the judgment, that acts of treacherous weakness should excite indignation and scorn; and the view of the world natural to this state of mind is quite as true as that current upon the Stock Exchange, and not at all more partial or prejudiced. It is not, indeed, the highest, any more than it is a complete view, but it is higher and truer than the 'all serene' contemplation of a comfortable Epicurean or passionless thinker. There is no cynicism in the 'fine curses' of *Locksley Hall;* they are not the poisonous exhalations of a corrupted nature, but the thunder and lightning that clear the air of what is foul, the forces by which a loving and poetical mind, not yet calmed and strengthened by experience and general principles, repels unaccustomed outrage and wrong. With what a rich emotion he recals his early recollections. Sea, sandy shore, and sky, have been for him a perpetual fountain of beauty and of joy, his youth a perpetual feast of imaginative knowledge and pictorial glory.

> Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
> Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the west.
>
> Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising thro' the mellow shade,
> Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled in a silver braid.
>
> Here about the beach I wander'd, nourishing a youth sublime
> With the fairy tales of Science, and the long result of Time.

With what a touching air of tenderness and protection he watches the young girl whom he loves in secret, and whose paleness and thinness excite his pity as well as his hope. How rapturously, when she avows her love, he soars up in his joy with a flight that would be tumultuous but for the swiftness of the motion,—unsteady but for the substantial massiveness of thought, and the grand poising sweep of the lyric power that sustains it:—

> Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in his glowing hands;
> Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands.
>
> Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
> Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight.
>
> Many a morning on the moorland did we hear the copses ring,
> And her whisper throng'd my pulses with the fulness of the Spring.
>
> Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships,
> And our spirits rush'd together at the touching of the lips.

Then how pathetic the sudden fall, the modulation by which he passes from the key of rapture to that of despair:—

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O my Amy, mine no more!
O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!

And here and there, through all that storm of anger, sarcasm, contempt, denunciation that follows, there sounds a note of unutterable tenderness which gives to the whole movement a prevailing character of pain and anguish, of moral desolation, rather than of wrath and vengeance. Not till this mood exhausts itself, and the mind of the speaker turns to action as a resource against despair, does he realise all that he has lost. Not only is his love uprooted,—his hope, his faith in the world have perished in that lightning-flash; and he turns again to his glorious youth, but now only to sound the gulf that separates him from it. The noble aspirations, the ardent hopes, the sanguine prophecies of earlier years roll in rich pomp of music and of picture before us; but it is the cloud-pageantry of the boy's day-dream which breaks up to reveal the world as it appears now to the 'palsied heart' and 'jaundiced eye' of the man. Yet, in the midst of this distempered vision are seen glimpses of a deeper truth. The eternal law of progress is not broken because the individual man is shipwrecked. It is but a momentary glimpse, and offers no firm footing. His personal happiness, after all, is what concerns each person. Here, at least, in this convention-ridden, Mammon-worshipping Europe, where the passions are cramped, and action that would give scope to passionate energy impossible, the individual has no chance. But in some less advanced civilization, where the individual is freer if the race be less forward, there may be hope. And a picture of the tropics rises before the imagination, dashed off in a few strokes of marvellous breadth and richness of colour:—

There to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster, knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland, droops the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the heavy-fruited tree—
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple spheres of sea.

But the deeper nature of the man controls the delusion of the fancy; his heart, reason, and conscience revolt against the escape into a mere savage freedom; they will not allow him to drop out of the van of the advancing host; and manly courage comes with the great thought of a society that is rapidly

fulfilling the idea of humanity; the personal unhappiness, the private wrong, the bitterness of outraged affection, give way before the upswelling sympathy with the triumph of the race to which he belongs. The passion has passed in the rush of words that gave it expression, and life shines clear again, no longer on the tender-hearted, imaginative boy, but on the man

> Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will,
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

There is no poem of Tennyson's more strikingly dramatic throughout than this, and none in which an age weakened by sentimental indulgence may find thoughts more suggestive of its recovery to manly vigour and endurance. And if, in works of art, artistic beauty alone be looked for, no poem can be more rich in colour, more rapid in movement, more abundant in exquisite beauties of detail. The verse is a marvel of force and grace,—full, majestic, impetuous,—thundering on like the downrush of a mighty cataract, with its infinite pulsations of light, its dazzling interradiation of changing forms and colours —the *ἀνηριθμον γελασμα* translated into sound. Its grand music, poured, full of grief and indignation, to the long swell of the waves upon the flat sandy shore, recals the Homeric

> Βη δ' ἀκεων παρα θινα πολυφλοισβοιο θαλασσης·
> Πολλα δ' ἐπειτ' ἀπανευθε κιων ἠραθ' ὁ γεραιος—

no less by its majesty of rhythm than by the likeness of the locality.

The four principal poems in the third series of Mr. Tennyson's works which depict love in its various influences upon different characters and under differing circumstances, have been now more or less fully touched on; and their general characteristic is, that the passion there shown in operation is a purifying, strengthening, sustaining power; that it allies itself with conscience and reason, and braces instead of debilitating the will. The small poem called *Fatima* is the only instance in which Mr. Tennyson has expended his powers in portraying any love that incapacitates for the common duties of life, unless the two *Marianas* be regarded in this light, which would be a perverse misconception of their main purpose. In *Locksley Hall* the ghost of a murdered love is fairly laid, and the man comes out of his conflict the stronger and the clearer for his experience. Nothing that can with any propriety be called morbid or unhealthy belongs to any of the great love poems in the collection; and surely the view of the relation of the sexes in the *Princess* is as sound a basis for a noble life as was ever propounded. It would be singular if,

with such antecedents, Mr. Tennyson should, in the maturity of his intellect and experience, have descended to exhibit the influence of love upon a weak and worthless character, and have chosen for that purpose a melodramatic story of suicide, murder, and madness, dished up for popular applause with vehement invective on the vices of the English nation, and claptrap appeals to the war-feeling of the day. This, however, is what we are asked to believe of Mr. Tennyson's latest production, *Maud*, by the loudest professional critics of the journals and magazines. The critics give us some gauge of their opinion by tracing Mr. Tennyson's gradual degradation through the *Princess*, lower still in *In Memoriam*, to its climax of weakness and absurdity in *Maud*; and it is but justice to say that these opinions are not now for the first time put forth on the provocation of the last-named poem, but appear to be the deliberate convictions of the writers. We believe that both the *Princess* and *In Memoriam* are in their sixth edition, which, apart from private experience, necessarily limited, of the impression the works have produced, leads to the conclusion that these writers do not in this case fairly represent the opinion of the English public. Whether they represent it any better in respect to *Maud* remains to be seen. Meanwhile it is well not to be frightened out of the enjoyment of fine poetry, and out of the instruction to be gained from a great poet's views of life, as exhibited dramatically in the destiny of a particular sort of character subjected to a particular set of influences, by such epithets as 'morbid,' 'hysterical,' 'spasmodic,' which may mean one thing or another, according to the sense, discrimination, and sympathy of the man who applies them.

There is little question as to the artistic merits of *Maud*. It is only the aim of the poet that has been assailed; his execution is generally admitted to be successful. It may be at once conceded that the writer of the fragments of a life which tell the story of *Maud*, is not in a comfortable state of mind when he begins his record; and that if a gentleman were to utter such sentiments at a board of railway directors, or at a marriage breakfast, he might not improperly be called hysterical. Like the hero of *Locksley Hall*, his view of the life around him, of the world in which his lot is cast, has been coloured by a grievous personal calamity; and the character of the man is originally one in which the sensibilities are keen and delicate, the speculative element strong, the practical judgment unsteady, the will and active energies comparatively feeble. A Shelley or a Keats may stand for example of his type; not perfect men, certainly, but scarcely so contemptible

as not to possess both dramatic interest and some claim to human sympathy. Chatterton, a much lower type than either, has been thought a subject of psychological and moral interest, in spite or in consequence of the vulgar, petulant, weak melodrama of his life and death. You see, God makes these morbid, hysterical, spasmodic individuals occasionally, and they have various fates; some die without a sign; others try the world, and dash themselves dead against its bars; some few utter their passionate desires, their weak complaints, their ecstatic raptures in snatches of song that make the world delirious with delight,—and somehow, for their sake the class becomes interesting, and we are at times inclined to measure the spiritual capacity of an age by its treatment of these weak souls,—by the fact, whether the general constitution of society cherishes such souls into divine lovers and singers of the beautiful, or lashes and starves and chains them into moping idiots and howling madmen. The autobiographer of *Maud* belongs to this class by temperament, as anyone may understand from the turn of his angry thoughts to those social evils which must and ought to excite indignation and scorn in gentle and loving natures that are at the same time inspired with generous and lofty ideas; from the speculative enigmas he torments himself with at the prevalence of rapine and pain in creation, at the insignificance of man in a boundless universe, subject to iron laws; from the penetrating tenderness, the rich fancy, the child-like *naïveté* of his love for the young girl who saves him from himself and his dark dreams. There lies in such a character, from the beginning, the capacity for weakness and misery, for crime and madness. That capacity is inseparable from keen sensibility, powerful emotions, and active imagination; and if events happen which paralyze the will already feeble, turn the flow of feeling into a stream of bitterness, and present to the imagination a world of wrong and suffering, the capacity fulfils itself according to the force and direction of the events. In *Maud* the tendency meets with events that carry it on through these stages; and the question is, whether any one of these events is impossible or improbable, whether English society is misrepresented when it is made capable of furnishing the unwholesome nutriment for such a character. It would rather seem as if the only improbable incident in the whole story were that which redeems society from a wholesale charge; as if the daughter of the millionaire, the sister of 'the dandy-despot, the oiled and curled Assyrian bull,' were the least likely character of the whole group. God be thanked, however, there are such girls; and many a noble woman—like

the Princess Ida—has given her heart out of pity to a man whose energy and hope she saw crushed for want of sympathy, and would endorse these lines:

> Perhaps the smile and tender tone
> Came out of her pitying womanhood,
> For am I not, am I not, here alone
> So many a summer since she died,
> My mother, who was so gentle and good?

And many a man who seems to himself to be living on without motive, 'a death in life,' could say,

> Ah! what shall I be at fifty?
> Should Nature keep me alive,
> If I find the world so bitter
> When I am but twenty-five?
> Yet, if she were not a cheat,
> If Maud were all that she seem'd,
> And her smile were all that I dream'd,
> Then the world were not so bitter
> But a smile could make it sweet.

No doubt it is only weak characters who are affected in this way. To strong men the world is not made bitter by a father's ruin and suicide, by the prevalence of meanness and cruelty, by contemptuous neglect, and general absence of sympathy. Nor would a girl's smile atone to them for such calamities as do affect them. So weakness has its compensation.

But then, some one will say, if the poet's intention were to exhibit the restorative power of love over a delicate and beautiful mind overthrown by circumstances,

> Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune, and harsh,—

and if, in respect to this intention, we allow the exhibition of the disease in order to feel the full force of the restoring influence, and of course are prepared that the love should be of a kind corresponding to the character,—rapturous, fanciful, childish, fitted more for a Southern woman like Juliet, as one of the best critics of *Maud* has remarked, than for an Englishman,—why does not the poet carry out his intention, and conduct his story to a happy close? Why, good sir or madam, does not Shakspeare let Juliet and her Romeo adorn Verona with troops of little Juliets and Romeos, to do as their papa and mamma did before them? Why does not Cordelia live to comfort Lear in his old age, restored to true appreciation of his daughters? Why does Ophelia drown in a ditch; and Hamlet, after murdering Polonius, die by chance medley? Why are not Othello's eyes opened before, instead of after his fatal deed, and he and Desdemona allowed to spend the rest of their days

in peace and mutual trust? Is it, think you, because Shakspeare belongs to the hysterical, morbid, spasmodic school, and likes the violent excitement of melo-dramatic incident? We should be sorry to stake much upon the reception any of these poetic issues would meet with from certain critics, if they now for the first time came up for judgment. Perhaps in all these cases he had some vague design of moving certain passions which the older critics knew by the name of pity and terror, and to which one who was himself something of a poet—the author of *Samson Agonistes*—refers approvingly, on the authority of Aristotle, as the justifying motive of tragedy. Perhaps, too, he might think it his business, in delineating particular characters, to express in their destiny his view of the general condition of society, as tested by the fate and fortunes of such characters. And possibly Mr. Tennyson may think himself justified in presenting a story that does not end happily, for both these reasons. It may appear to him that 'the course of true love' would be unlikely to 'run smooth' under the circumstances of Maud and her lover, combined with the conditions of English modern life; that the man had not the coolness and self-control to master the circumstances; and that there was not in society the generosity and disregard of rank and money necessary to allow the restorative influence of Maud's affection to work out its cure. Divest the story for a moment of its lyric elevation, and compare it with our greatest novelist's treatment of a somewhat kindred case. Suppose Mr. Barnes Newcome had not been a coward as well as a brute, and had found his sister Ethel holding a *tête-à-tête* in the garden with her cousin Clive, after an evening party to which the Most Noble the Marquis of Farintosh had been invited expressly to conclude his courtship,—is it not possible that Mr. Barnes and his cousin might have enacted the scene between the 'Assyrian bull' and Maud's lover? The physical courage of the Assyrian bull is quite as true, to say the least, to the real types of his class as the physical cowardice of Barnes Newcome. But the object of the novelist not being to excite pity and terror, he developes the selfishness and Mammon-worship of English rich people to other consequences and in another direction. The poet takes his course, too, with equal effect towards carrying out his design, and without violating, so far as we see, the essential contemporary truth of his story; while he is thus enabled to exhibit some of the eternal elements of tragedy still in operation among us.

We need say nothing of the skill and beauty with which the remorse of the murderer is painted. The wonderful power of the strains in which the successive stages of this feeling are

represented, is admitted on all hands. English literature has nothing more dramatically expressive of a mind on the verge of overthrow, than the verses in which the shell on the Brittany coast serves as text; nothing that presents the incipient stage of madness, springing from the wrecked affections, with more of reality and pathos than the poem, 'Oh! that 'twere possible,' now recovered from the pages of a long-forgotten miscellany, and set as a jewel amid jewels; nothing that surpasses in truth and terrible force the madhouse soliloquy, 'Dead, long dead!' If the poem had ended there, 'the strangest anti-climax that we ever remember to have read' would not have offended the critic of the *Times*. We fear that in that case, true enough to nature as it might have been, the climax would have come in for blame of the opposite character, and the poet have been found fault with for leaving his readers to dwell upon horrible impressions without relief. We are sure that no poet deserving the name would choose such an ending where any other was possible. But men do recover from madness, and can—though with an awe-struck sense of their own unfitness for life, a nervous apprehension that paralyzes energy and action,—be roused to interest themselves in something out of themselves and their miseries. And Mr. Tennyson, who introduces his hero breathing scorn and indignation on the meanness and littleness of a society, where the vices of individuals are not obscured and compensated by any conscious noble aim of the commonwealth, dismisses him, cheered and strengthened by knowing that the British nation has risen for a time to a consciousness of a great purpose,—has awaked out of its commercial epicureanism, and roused itself to fight a battle for the right and the good. In sympathy with a grand purpose and a high resolve animating his countrymen, the dreary phantom that had haunted him departs; he knows that his love has forgiven him the injury that his passionate heart caused her; and he can wait, calm and hopeful, till death reunites them.

The fact is, that Mr. Tennyson, without abandoning his lyric forms, has in *Maud* written a tragedy—a work, that is, which demands to be judged not by the intrinsic goodness and beauty of the actions and emotions depicted, but by their relation to character; that character, again, being not only an interesting study in itself and moving our sympathy, but being related dynamically to the society of the time which serves as the back-ground of the picture, and thus displaying the characteristics of the society by showing its influence, under particular circumstances, upon the character selected. Mr. Tennyson's critics have for the most part read the poem as if

its purpose were to hold up an example for our imitation, and have condemned it because, viewed in this light, it offers nothing but a nature of over-excitable sensibilities, first rendered moody by misfortune, then driven mad by its own crime, and finally recovered to a weak exultation in a noble enterprise it has not the manliness to share. But no one feels that Shakspeare is immoral in making Othello kill himself; no one attributes the cynicism of Mephistopheles to Goethe; no one dares to say of these great poets—

Intention!—the intention of a poet is determined by his tastes and habits; and when we find poets abhorrent of all moral virtue, piping of suicide, murder, adultery, and fornication, we may set them down as reprobates, whose poems reflect their characters.

Why should the author of *The Gardener's Daughter* be set down as morbid?—the author of *Locksley Hall* as one who sees no worth in action?—the author of *Dora* as a selfish dreamer, who knows nothing of duty? Let us try and be as just to the great men that live amongst us, as to those who are beyond our praise or blame. Let us not stone our own prophets, while we build the tombs of the men who prophesied to our forefathers.

It is a step back in respect of date to speak of *The Princess* after *Maud;* but while the latter is the deepest and most tragical exhibition of the action of love upon the character and destiny of an individual that Mr. Tennyson has given to the world, the former treats the sexual relations in their most comprehensive form, and may so be considered as containing implicitly all individual love-poems, as the poetical statement of the law which they all exhibit in particular instances. In its philosophical aim, therefore, *The Princess* belongs to the same class of poems as *The Palace of Art* and *The Vision of Sin*, in both of which a law of life is presented, not as modified by the peculiar nature and circumstances of an individual, but in its absolute universality as a law for the human race. It is natural enough that in an age when absolute and universal solutions are sought not only for physical phenomena, but also for mental and social,—when not only the movements of the heavenly bodies and the complex relations of the constituent elements of organic matter, but the course of thought—the growth, decay, and character of states,—in a word, the whole life of the individual, and the collective life of humanity, are supposed to be traceable to the orderly operation of fixed principles,—it is natural that, fascinated by the grandeur of speculations of this immensity, the poet, too, should attempt to rise above the portraiture of individual life to the exhibition, in an absolute form, of the principles that determine individual life.

Always, indeed, it has been held that the highest poetry gave the law as well as the special instance; interpreted humanity as well as some individual life; and became highest by blending, as they say, the universal with the particular. This, however, simply means that true portraiture of individual life necessarily involves generic and specific, as well as individual truth; that John or Mary must be man and woman—English man and English woman—to be a pair of real human beings, under the influence of any particular feelings. Such poems as those mentioned above drop the individual and the special altogether, and attempt to present a law of human nature in operation upon beings who are human without being particular men or women. Now, it is the very essence of poetry to present, not abstract propositions to the intellect, but concrete real truth to the senses, the affections,—to the whole man, in short; and this can be done only by presenting objects as they exist and act upon one another, and upon our minds, in the real world,—not logical objects formed by the action of our analytic faculty, and abstracted from reality. Such universality as poetry has is derived from the fact, that the individual contains the genus and the species, and that the pure universal of the intellect has no counterpart in nature, and is therefore not a truth in the sense in which poetry concerns itself with truth. And poets who attempt to get beyond individual truth, implicitly containing generic and specific truth, fall into one of two mistakes: they either present the truth as abstract statement, dressed up in rhetorical ornament, and so fail to fulfil the true function of their genius,—or, feeling the necessity of avoiding this, they invent a fictitious allegorical machinery, with which they obscure the statement, and are, in fact, treating a special instance, with this difference,—that the individual traits are fanciful and arbitrary, instead of being those of actual experience. The result, in the latter case, is that the reader makes the universality by his abstraction of details, getting, at last, back to a mere abstract statement, and so loses all the force of true poetic teaching; while, as the only compensation, his imagination is amused by the ingenuity and beauty of the machinery. And, in both cases, by aiming at an universality which belongs to science, poetry loses her true prerogative; and no longer commanding the sympathies, fails to teach,—becoming at once less useful and less delightful. *The Palace of Art* and *The Vision of Sin* are instances of the one mode of treatment; *The Two Voices* may partly serve to illustrate the other. All three contain exquisite detail, but the whole fails of its effect. And were we compelled to regard *The Princess* solely as an

attempt to exhibit the action and justification of sexual love as an universal law of human life, as an allegory, aiming at scientific generality, a similar failure would certainly have to be recorded. The machinery would, in that case, be overdone—would attract the attention to detail quite as much as if a merely common love-story were being told, without giving the force of reality,—and would, by the preponderance of detail, and traits of individuality and special circumstance, derogate from the pure universality of the problem. But, in fact, *The Princess* is 'earnest wed with sport,'—the attempt of a mind, whose feeling for the beautiful and the true is stronger than its humour and fun, to treat certain modern mistakes about the true relation of man and woman with good-humoured satire, and in spite of this intention impelled to a strain of serious thought and impassioned feeling. It is a laugh subsiding into a loving smile,—playful irony surprised into tenderness and tears. But because the commencement is mock-heroic, and the machinery highly fanciful—though not so removed from possibility as to baffle belief and distress the judgment,—the earnest close seems rather the poet's own utterance of his views of the relations of the sexes, than the inherent moral of the story. And admiring, as all must, the sweet tenderness and noble thought of the dialogue that ends the poem,—the magnificence, at once so rich and tasteful, of the description of the woman's college, and of the scenery about it,—the exquisite sentiment and finish of the interspersed songs and idylls,—the movement and dramatic life of the whole poem,—one cannot help regretting that the longest, and in some respects the finest, of Mr. Tennyson's productions should have been fairly characterized by him as 'A Medley,' and that he should have been obliged at last to say,—

> Then rose a little feud betwixt the two—
> Betwixt the mockers and the realists:
> And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,
> And yet to give the story as it rose,
> I moved as in a strange diagonal,
> And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

However, the incongruity is there, and we must make the best of it. It interferes, somewhat, with our interest in the loves of the Prince and Princess as actual human beings, and deprives the grand philosophic sentiment at the close of the impressiveness that belongs to the moral of an actual human story. On the other hand, the impulse towards an earnest treatment of the subject, struggling through and finally overcoming the mock-heroic, gives the advantage of a contrast,

and we pass from the one to the other with a heightened zest and relish. Altogether, if we give ourselves up to the poet—not setting rules for him, but letting him take us along as he will, and accepting his account of the origin and motives of his poem,—we shall find nothing wanting to a complete work of art, which may not be the most profound or affecting treatment of a great truth, but which, flowering thick with beauties of detail, is graceful and noble throughout, and rises to a close in which lofty thought and passionate feeling blend, typifying the union of man and woman, in one full, rich stream of poetry,—

> The two-celled heart beating with one full stroke
> Life.

We have not spoken of Mr. Tennyson as a song writer; yet, had he written nothing but half-a-dozen of his best songs, his place among English poets would have been incontestibly high. *Flow down cold Rivulet to the Sea—Break, break—The Bugle Song—Tears, idle Tears—Come down, O Maid, from yonder Mountain Height,*—and the lyric that sparkles through *The Brook*, would by themselves found a reputation as lasting as the English language. One might almost as well attempt to define the simple sensations or to explain why a melody in music charms the ear, as to convey in words the impression any of these songs makes upon the reader. One may analyse them, and put down the separate feelings and images of which they consist; but the effort to reflect upon them substitutes thoughts for sentiments, as some of the most delicate perfumes of flowers refuse to yield themselves to an effort, and only affect us as we catch their evanescent fragrance in fitful wafts. Take, for instance, *Tears, idle Tears*, to which the title of *Regret* might be affixed. No doubt its charm partly depends on the pathetic character of the separate images collected from human life by the dominant feeling, and on the skill with which these rise gradually to a climax. The sad pleasure excited by the waning fields in autumn—one of the lightest and most evanescent of regrets,—deepens into the feelings with which the return and the departure of friends whose dwelling is beyond the ocean is regarded. It passes, by a most natural and touching gradation, to that last parting from all that is dear upon earth, when the sweetness of the least objects that have blended with happy lives is solemnized and saddened by the thought that it is felt for the last time by the departing spirit; and that solemn sweetness passes again to a climax in the passion of tenderness and regret which makes the memory of the dead dearer than the presence of the living,

—the passion of tenderness and despair which gives an agonizing rapture to the dreams of hopeless love.

But the power of the song over our feelings is far greater than can be attributed to any succession of pathetic recollections of human life presented distinctly as objects of thought. It awakes all the fountains of bitter-sweet memory, sets us dreaming like a half audible strain of music in the distance, without fixing the mind to definite objects, suspends reflection and will, and brings up all the delicious sweetness of the past with the sadness that it is past,—all the brightness of our brightest moments with the cloud that so soon passes over them,—the meetings and the partings, the eternal change and flow, that make up human life. It is in its infinite suggestiveness that its charm lies; in its power, not to bring this or that pathetic remembrance before the mind, but to set the mind at the tone of delicious day-dreaming, and to give a half blissful, half-regretful key-note to the day-dreams. And this subtle power of suggestiveness belongs more or less to all Mr. Tennyson's songs; they all seem to touch chords that lie deeper down than the region of clear intellectual consciousness; they present definite ideas, but they present them with such delicacy of touch as to leave the mind only half conscious of their presence,—just sufficiently conscious to be set off dreaming about them, to feel their influence without being drawn out of itself to them, while the melody of the strain keeps up the creative power of dreaming at its highest activity.

Scarcely one of the more elaborate poems of which we have spoken, though its main object is to present the passion of love in its influence upon various characters under various circumstances, fails to supply abundant evidence of Mr. Tennyson's interest in other phases of life than those coloured by high emotion, and of his power to present them with new force and meaning. A fine sense of natural beauty and a marvellous faculty of word-painting adorn his love-poems with landscape pictures which need fear comparison with those of no English poet. *Locksley Hall* is a grand hymn of human progress, in which the discoveries of science, the inventions of art, the order and movement of society, the sublime hopes and beliefs of religion, blend in a magnificent vision of the age, and are sung with the rapture of a prophet to the noblest music. In *Maud* the commonest newspaper details of the meanness, the cheating, the cruelty, the crime and misery, so rife among us, supply food to the *sæva indignatio* of the man whose temperament and circumstances make him look on the darker aspects of the time; and the same man finds in the

latest topic of the day—which is also one of the grandest spectacles of our age—the comfort and the hope that restore him to sanity and peace with himself and the world. In *The Princess*, history, science, and metaphysics, are touched with a light of penetrating intellect as well as a grace of poetry; the amusements of a Mechanic's Institute and the genial pleasantry of a gay picnic party contrast with the profoundest reflections on the Continental Revolutions of '48 and the most hopeful interpretations of the last new socialist theories. It is this wide range of thought, ever active in every direction to supply material for the imaginative faculty of the artist,—this catholic sympathy with modern life in all its characteristic phases, that is Mr. Tennyson's distinguishing quality, and that, in combination with his formal poetic skill, renders him the favourite poet of the cultivated classes. And it is in the development of this wide range of thought and sympathy in his poems published since 1833 that the growth and maturity of his genius mainly manifests itself. It is because he has grown and ripened as a man that his art has seemed to become more perfect with every production.

Although, however, these qualities are abundantly evidenced by the poems hitherto treated, it would leave this survey incomplete were we not to allude to the poems which are devoted expressly to the delineation of other phases of modern life than those mainly dependent on the passion of sexual love. If there were no other motive, the necessity of indicating Mr. Tennyson's power of writing in a homelier, a less ornate and elaborate style than he generally adopts as the proper dramatic expression of the characters and moods of passion he is presenting, would be motive enough. But in fact *The Brook*, *Edwin Morris*, and *The Golden Year*, are among his most pleasing productions. *The Day Dream*, really a love-poem within a love-poem, exquisitely blends sport with earnest, and might be taken in its growth from *The Sleeping Beauty* to its present elaborate form as a type of the development of Mr. Tennyson's genius from sensuous beauty and rhythmical music to the deep heart and wise intellect of his later poems. *Audley Court* contains a charming song and a delicious moonlight landscape, besides a transcendant description of a game-pie. *Walking to the Mail* is a shrewd conversation on the causes that develope character and determine political opinion; not in our opinion particularly worthy of blank verse or its place in the collection. Then there are the expressly political lyrics, one of which, at least, *Love thou thy Land*, is only to be compared with an essay of Lord Bacon's for its compressed energy and imaginative reality of phrase,

for its fulness and wisdom of sentiment; and far above any essay of Lord Bacon's for its ardent patriotism, its noble sense of right and truth, its grand faith in human destiny, its prudence, and its courage. An obscure stanza or two scarcely make themselves felt in the recollection of its general effect.

But we must speak briefly of *In Memoriam*. What survey of Mr. Tennyson's poetry could be satisfactory without it? Certainly not ours, who do not believe all feelings to be morbid and unhealthy which are not joyous or comfortable, and who do believe that sorrow, and doubt, and meditation have their appointed beneficent influence upon human character, and are no less part of human training for a nobler and more blessed existence than mirth, and demonstrative certainty, and vigorous action. We should be guilty of treason against our deepest convictions were we to pass without a protest the notion that *In Memoriam* is a morbid mistake,—the unhealthy product of a man of genius in an unhealthy mood, degrading his genius by employing it in the delineation of a sorrow that is unmanly and exaggerated,—a spasmodic utterance of a weak mind, that can only affect other weak minds with hysterical emotion, and incapacitate all who subject themselves to its influence for their duties to their fellow men and their reliance upon the goodness of God. Even if we regarded *In Memoriam* as simply the record of a personal sorrow, a poetical monument to a personal friend, we should be cautious of calling it exaggerated, till we were quite certain that there was anything unworthy and unmanly in binding up our hearts with the life of another, and in feeling them quiver with agony when that other life was torn from us. It is easy to understand, when social intercourse goes no deeper than liking and disliking, being amused and bored; when personal relations have dwindled down to club intimacies, and a friend is the man with whom we dine and play whist; that such a tender and rooted affection as is recorded through *In Memoriam* should appear exaggerated. The question is whether the Pall-Mall standard of human nature be the highest, whether a profound personal affection be really a weakness, or whether on the Pall-Mall theory the world would not rapidly become a pigstye or a slaughter-house. Compare the tone in which Shakspeare addresses the male friend to whom the greater number of the sonnets apply, with Tennyson's tone in speaking of Arthur Hallam. If the one is supposed to do no discredit to the soundest-hearted as well as the largest-minded man of modern Europe, why is the other to be called morbid and exaggerated? The critics need not take so much trouble to let

the world know that they are not Shakspeares and Tennysons in heart any more than in intellect. No one who knows the class would be in danger of so erroneous a supposition. But there are thousands of men and women whose affections are akin to those of these great poets, and who are grateful for the power of reading in beautiful poetry an adequate expression of their own deepest feelings. We know that such persons find in *In Memoriam* the sort of consolation and strength they find in the Psalms of David. The *suspiria de profundis* of great minds give articulate expression to, and interpret the sorrows of lesser minds, which else would darken life with 'clouds of nameless trouble,' and perhaps never find a peaceful solution.

But the personal motive of *In Memoriam* is quite inadequate as the standing point for criticism of the poem.

> The imaginative woe
> That loves to handle spiritual strife

is operative throughout; and, as Coleridge says of love,—

> All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
> Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
> Are all but ministers of love,
> And feed his sacred flame—

so, *In Memoriam* traverses the widest circuit of thought and feeling in search of nutriment to its mood, and represents the night-side of the soul as rich in objects and as various in hues, as the side illuminated by love and joy, but all in sad greys and browns, or shining with the tender grace of the moonlight or starlight which the brilliance of the full day conceals. There is as much variety and beauty in this aspect of life, as in the other; and as God has created us with large capacities for sorrow, and has placed us in circumstances which give those capacities ample employment, it is, perhaps, quite as sensible to inquire what possible meaning lies in this arrangement, as to ignore the fact altogether; and quite as religious to presume that it has some beneficent meaning, and is not without a gracious design in training men to virtue and blessedness, as to attempt to baffle the arrangement by drowning the voice of nature in pleasure or in action. If all life but enjoyment and action is morbid and unhealthy, the world has been strangely misconstructed. The mere comfort and serenity of the human race seem not to have been leading objects in its design. Had the Epicureans been consulted at the creation, they could, no doubt, have suggested several improvements. As a late eminent judge remarked, they would have had it rain only during the night; and, with

Porson, when Parr, 'the schoolmaster run to seed,' pompously asked him, 'Mr. Professor, what do you think of the existence of physical and moral evil?' they would reply, 'Why, Doctor, I think we could have done very well without either.' Unfortunately, neither Epicurean, nor stoic, nor egotist of any school or sect, was taken into counsel when the foundations of the universe were laid. And Mr. Tennyson, finding himself in a world where sorrow alternates with joy, and in a nation whose humour, even, has been supposed to have a serious and Saturnine cast,—having heard, too, we may presume, of a text in a certain book which says, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted,'—and having himself lost a friend who was as the light of his eyes and the joy of his heart, has not thought it an unworthy employment of his poetic gifts to bestow them in erecting a monument to his friend, upon which he has carved bas-reliefs of exceeding grace and beauty, and has worked delicate flowers into the cornices, and adorned the capitals of the columns with emblematic devices; and upon the summit he has set the statue of his friend, and about the base run the sweetest words of love with the mournfullest accents of grief—the darkest doubts with the sublimest hopes. The groans of despair are there, with the triumphant songs of faith, and over all, in letters of gold, surmounting the mingled posies which tell of all the moods of the human mind through its years of mourning, is the scroll on which one reads from afar, '*I am the resurrection and the life.*' '*Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.*'

The strains of *In Memoriam* are, happily, familiar enough to dispense with any absolute necessity for proving by quotations that the tone of the poem is as noble and as manly as it is touching and sorrowful. But such strains tempt one on to relieve description by pausing on their exquisite beauty; and this paper cannot be better brought to a close, than by some specimens of the varieties of topic and of mood which make *In Memoriam* by itself a kind of complement to the sunny hemisphere of life which Mr. Tennyson's genius has, in his other poems, so richly illuminated and brought out in all its profusion of colour, picturesqueness of form, and interest of movement.

Here, to begin with, is a landscape, with Turner's atmospheric depth, all his glory of local colour and aerial effect; but what could the picture have told us, with the figure of the mourner and the funeral-ship at anchor, compared with the articulate speech which contrasts the sweet repose of nature with the calm despair of the heart upon which all the sweetness of nature jars:—

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chesnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

Take another mood—one that prevails through *In Memoriam*, the first strain of which strikes the same noble key-note, but which has no higher expression than in these four stanzas:—

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth,
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

Is that morbid, hysterical, unhealthy? Or is it the profoundest vindication, at once of love and of sorrow for the loss of those we love? It may appear inconsistent for one who believes that his friend 'lives in God,' and who also believes that 'immortal love' rules the destinies of men, to grieve at all. But the paradox belongs not to our imperfect

stage of faith. It was manifested fully in the life of Him who was our example,—who wept for the Lazarus He was about to recal from the tomb—wept tears of blood in prospect of the sacrifice that was to redeem the race of which He was the Head. Neither his omniscience, nor his infinite power, saved Him from a real sorrow. Pain is pain, and loss is loss, though neither is eternal. Man being man, lives in the present, though he can look forward to the future; and his belief that the sun will rise to-morrow does not make to-night less dark. Love and grief are inseparably united under the conditions of human life. If we reject the one, we cannot enjoy the other. Poetry and passion are nobler and wiser than stoicism or Epicureanism, and their voices join to say,—

Let Love clasp Grief, lest both be drowned.

Some of the finest strains of *In Memoriam* are devoted to topics connected with the question of personal immortality. No. 35 is the answer to Comtian materialism, which the mere intellect is quite unable to refute. That very progress on which Comte bases his system is due to the truth he refuses to acknowledge. Had men been Comtians from the beginning, there would have been no science, no material progress, no law of development of ideas; and were men to all become Comtians, these would not only cease, but the world would rapidly retrograde into a savage state of beastliness and stupidity. Apart from the beauty and force of the expression, nothing can be completer as a philosophical essay:—

Yet if some voice that man could trust,
Should murmur from the narrow house:
The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
Man dies: nor is there hope in dust:

Might I not say, yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive?
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;

And love would answer with a sigh,
'The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and more,
Half dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

Yet Mr. Tennyson is the last person to accept falsification of science, partial views of material nature, as a refuge from hopeless scepticism. He is one like the friend he mourns, who

Fought his doubts and gathered strength.

It is as much for its unreserved sincerity and resolute stand upon ascertained facts of nature, as for its noble poetry and its passionate cleaving to a higher truth above nature, that we quote No. 55:—

'So careful of the type?' but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'a thousand types are gone.'
I care for nothing, all shall go.

Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death:
The spirit doth but mean the breath:
I know no more! And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed,
And love Creation's final law—
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his creed—

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

And, as a last echo of this morbid, hysterical poem—which the poetry-critic of *Blackwood* does not make part of his travelling library, but leaves on the shelf with Blair's *Grave*, preferring, it may be presumed, Bon Gaultier's *Ballads*,

Firmilian, and Aytoun's *Lays of the Cavaliers* (all very clever productions, against which we have not a word to say, any more than against *Punch*, *The Rejected Addresses*, and the last new military quadrilles)—let us listen to the New-Year's hymn which, somehow, the people of England has taken for its national song of hope and prophecy of all good things to come:—

Ring out wild bells to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease,
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

G. B.

GENERAL EDUCATION AND CLASSICAL STUDIES.

'I maintain that Greek and Latin are peculiar and indispensable elements of a liberal education.'—Dr. WHEWELL *On the Principles of English University Education*, page 33.

THERE has grown up of late years in England, especially among persons engaged in trade, a strong feeling against the system of education pursued in our grammar-schools. During the long peace, the attention of our countrymen has been so exclusively directed to commercial development, mechanical inventions, and manufacturing processes, that whatever is not a means to these ends comes to be regarded as nothing worth. The number of those has greatly increased who, to use the words of Bacon, 'call upon men to sell their books and build furnaces, quitting and forsaking Minerva and the Muses as barren virgins, and relying upon Vulcan.'* Moreover, great as has been the growth of our external commerce, yet at home, the ratio which the town population bears to the country,—in other words, the proportion of manufacturers and retailers to customers,—has increased still more; and the result is a fierce competition, which constrains the tradesman and artisan to abridge their children's school-time, and also to insist upon their being taught only what can be turned to immediate account. A hard race is before them—a race for very life—wherein he who lags is lost, and for that race they must be trained. A boy may be able to discriminate between *nummi* and *pecunia*, but that accomplishment will not get him a clerkship, if he is slow at compound addition. Again, why teach metrical feet to one who is destined to manipulate a yard-wand? Is not book-keeping better than book-learning, and 'practice' more than prosody?

These complaints, which find their vent chiefly in provincial

* *Advancement of Learning*, b. ii. p. 70.

newspapers, are often embittered by political animosity; for the grammar-schools, which have for the most part celebrated their ter-centenary, rank among our old institutions; they are placed under the administration of an ecclesiastic and the control of country gentlemen, and they are often intimately connected with the universities, those strongholds of Toryism. Accordingly, the said grammar-schools, and all that is taught therein, are marked out for weekly assault by the ——*shire Independent*, to which the ——*shire Conservative* duly replies, but in a feeble half-hearted way, as if doubtful of the cause, abandoning the defence of Greek as untenable, and justifying the study of Latin by the necessity of understanding apothecaries' prescriptions and the perorations of parliamentary speakers. Generally speaking, the *Independent* wins the day. The grammar-school trustees, either convinced by argument or desirous of acquiring popularity without cost or risk to themselves, obtain the ready permission of the chancellor to apply a portion of the funds to the erection of a commercial school alongside of the ancient foundation. An estimate is made by a fashionable architect; the school-property is mortgaged for that amount; soon an edifice, presenting a happy combination of Early English and Flamboyant Gothic, is seen overtopping and putting to shame the modest Tudor building beside it. The edifice in question is found to have cost twice as much as the estimate; and the trust estate is hopelessly indebted. At the neighbouring town, perhaps, things are managed better. Some audacious thinker among the trustees dares to assert that a medieval banqueting-hall is not absolutely essential for the carrying on of primary education in the nineteenth century, and persuades his colleagues to content themselves with plain brick walls and sash windows. The funds are provided by the quiet suppression of scholarships and exhibitions. Here and there a resolute head-master succeeds in staving off the threatened blow; but few there are who wield the rod securely, unperplexed by fear of change.

Had such cases been rare and isolated, and therefore of merely local or provincial interest, they might have been left for the discussion of the ——shire newspapers; but the frequency of their occurrence invests them in the aggregate with the dignity of a national movement, and accordingly, the great London journals have not unfrequently discussed the question,—if not always with a clear conception of its bearings and a due absence of party feeling, yet at all events without admixture of local and personal antipathies, and from a higher point of view. At the same time the field of controversy is widened. The question no longer is, whether classics be a

fitting basis of commercial education, but whether they ought to be the basis of education at all; and it is attempted not merely to reconstitute this or that provincial school, but to revolutionize Eton and Harrow, Oxford and Cambridge. The balance of public opinion, so far as the press may be taken as its index, inclines decidedly in favour of change. But it may, without arrogance or pedantry, be doubted whether the public has thought enough on the matter to be entitled to form an opinion, and whether, after all that has been said, it has yet sufficient data to come to a conclusion. The limits within which a newspaper article is necessarily confined, preclude the natural development of so wide a subject; and we fear, moreover, that the interest generally felt in it is by no means commensurate with its importance, which doubtless is the reason why it has been so rarely, if ever, treated in the quarterly reviews. And yet among the moot questions and pending disputes of the time, there is none, unless it be the Russian war, which stands in more urgent need of prompt settlement. The sooner those who teach and those who send their sons to learn understand one another as to the system of education to be pursued, the better for both parties. And the sooner we find out what is the best system, and adopt it, the better it will be for a third party, whose interests are somewhat involved—namely, the boys.

We are not, then, reviving an extinct controversy, nor stirring a subject of merely scholastic interest, if we recapitulate, from memory, the assertions and recommendations made from time to time in the papers, for the purpose of examining what truth there is in the one and what merit in the other. And however disposed I might be from circumstances to constitute myself an apologist of the established system, I hope to be able to treat the matter impartially on its own merits, being on my guard against suggestions of personal interest, and bearing in mind the proneness of men to set an exaggerated value upon the subjects of their special study. Highly as I estimate the cultivation of ancient languages as a means of instruction, I do not forget the claims of other studies upon which we must not trench. I know that there are different plans of education, fitted to the exigencies of different classes whose means and needs it is our duty to consider. The jeweller in the play, when consulted as to the best means of binding a breaking heart, can think of nothing but an emerald bracelet. I shall take care not to vaunt my wares with the like want of discrimination. No Sganarelle among my readers shall have occasion to quote the proverbial retort, 'Vous êtes orfèvre, Monsieur Josse!'

I proceed, then, to give a summary of the objections raised not only by writers who have vowed a general crusade against antiquity and prescription, and who are bound to maintain that whatever is is wrong, but also by men of high culture and great ability, in the columns of journals neither pledged to party nor often swayed by passion. It has been asserted that the present system is theoretically indefensible, and is maintained only by interest on the one part and ignorance on the other, or at best by a blind adherence to, and acquiescence in, established routine; that it is absurd to force all young intellects, be they great or small, fine or gross, into the same bed of Procrustes; to apply one and the same method to the willing and the recalcitrant; that the treacle and brimstone of the novelist's cheap Yorkshire school is but a type of mental pabulum as administered in the costly establishments of the south: that the power of construing an easy Latin passage with more or less accuracy—generally less, and of fabricating to order a score of 'longs and shorts' with more or fewer blunders—generally more, is a ludicrously inadequate result of the time and pains bestowed; that these accomplishments, ever so perfectly acquired, are of no avail in ordinary life, but are at once disused and speedily forgotten; that, besides not being worth the teaching, they are ill-taught; that, for example, the *Eton Latin Grammar* and similar works, present the rudiments of language under their most repulsive form; whereas the bitter cup of knowledge ought, by the authority even of one of the favoured 'classics,' to be presented to the child with sugared rim. Metaphor apart, it is affirmed that modern languages, and ancient too, if taught on the natural system, might be acquired with the same unconscious facility as the mother tongue; that modern history and modern geography might be made as interesting as the *Arabian Nights* or *Robinson Crusoe*; that the fairy tales of science might be told so as to enchain the attention of the boy as completely as those of Madame d'Aulnoy enchain the attention of the child: and that these branches of knowledge, so acquired, would form a permanent treasure for the man which would stand him in good stead through all the exigencies of life, never lost because daily counted,—never rusting because daily used.

Such I believe to be a tolerably faithful representation of the gist of the articles to which I refer;—the words are mine, the spirit is theirs. Mr. Carlyle, if I read aright a passage in his *Life of Sterling* (pp. 44, 45), entertains views tending in the same direction, but going much farther—far indeed beyond man's limited powers of expression; and a

celebrated orator of the Lower House declared that a single copy of *The Times* was worth more than all the eight books of Thucydides. How far the quotations of the West Riding markets, under the head of literature, represent the sterling value of the articles, we proceed to inquire.

We have thus before us two sets of objectors to the system of instruction at present followed in grammar-schools, colleges, and universities; first, the trading class, who affirm that it is not suitable to their requirements; and secondly, an indefinite number of men, more or less literary, of the upper and middle classes, who affirm that it is not adapted for their needs, or, in other words, is unfitted for the purposes of a liberal and professional education. The first class demand a complete revolution within the limited sphere of their interests; the second enlarge the circuit of operations so as to embrace all the educational institutions of the country, but differ among themselves as to the degree of change desirable. Some, despairing of any change which should give vitality to the effete system, would annihilate for ever 'gerund-grinding and death in longs and shorts;' others would be content with applying modern languages as palliatives, and with administering as a restorative what is called 'Useful Knowledge'—a term which, by arbitrarily excluding the ancient languages, begs the whole question.

Précisons. Let us discriminate. Education, as practised in this country, and, indeed, in every other country which possesses a social organization, may be divided into four classes—1, primary; 2, commercial; 3, liberal; and 4, professional. The second is an offshoot or graft of the first, and might be subdivided into almost as many heads as there are trades; the third, embracing the first and excluding all that belongs distinctively to the second, resembles the first generically, in that it aims at no special end but the training of the mind, while it differs from the first in the degree to which that mental training is carried, the one being confined within narrow limits, and the other capable of indefinite extension; the fourth is engrafted upon the third, and might, analogously to the second, be subdivided into as many heads as there are professions.

The application of these several classes is necessarily determined by the worldly means and rank of the recipients. Primary education, comprising, at the best, only reading, writing, the rudiments of arithmetic, and brief catechisms of history and geography, is all which the stress of poverty permits to the working people. Millions of children, almost literally '*born* to labour and the mattock-hardened hand,' must

needs commence their life of toil in the factory or the field, as soon as their physical strength enables them to get a day's wage for a day's work. In the one case, the mental powers sympathize with the bodily, overworn with long hours, and are debased by evil communications; in the other, they are brutalized by isolation, and, as it were, rusted by the absence of all inducement for the exercise of thought. On the other hand, those who are employed in what is called 'skilled labour,' though of necessity taken away early from school, yet, as their handicrafts call some mental faculties into play, and perfect the delicacy of sight and touch, continue to add to the originally scanty stock of school-learning till it grows to a goodly store. Sometimes, too, the artisan develops into the artist, and the amusement of leisure hours becomes the grand business of life; the stone mason becomes a statuary, and the house and sign painter a royal academician. Even among the drudges of the factory and the furrow, here and there great natural gifts, favoured by some happy chance, enable a man to rise above the circumstances of his birth, and win his way to eminence, but such phenomena are as rare as they are admirable. A profound sympathy with our fellow-creatures and fellow-countrymen, thus condemned to a life-long servitude which degrades them almost to the level of dumb beasts, has led many good men to embrace the wild dreams of the socialist; we, who believe that the existence of a wide-spread poverty is a sad necessity which no laws have caused and no laws can cure, are bound, in any modification of our institutions, to take care that increased facilities for rising be afforded to those of the lowest class who shall prove themselves worthy to rise, so that great minds shall receive their fitting culture, and find their proper sphere; that village Hampdens may serve the state; that village Miltons, finding a voice, may receive their due meed of glory, and the world no longer be ignorant of its greatest men. Such a noble purpose was in the minds of our forefathers who left to us the great educational foundations which we hold in trust for them and for posterity,—William of Wykeham, the Lady Margaret, the sixth Henry, and the sixth Edward. Great will be our guilt if, instead of opening new paths to humble merit, we close the paths which have been open heretofore. Are we not about to incur this guilt? Look through the list of Englishmen who have risen from the depths of obscurity and poverty to eminence and honour, what a large proportion will be found to have owed that rise to the rural grammar-school, the exhibition, the university, the college fellowship. Such instances, comparatively frequent in old times, have become, I fear, much rarer of late. It would

be foreign to my main subject, and inconsistent with my prescribed limits, to enter into the causes of this lamentable change. One great cause, however, is not far to seek, and that is the alteration in the value of money, whereby an exhibition once adequate to the student's wants now barely suffices to pay his travelling expenses. What was once a tempting prize to the poor man is now a mockery. Again, when, as it would seem, wages bore a higher proportion to the price of the first necessaries of life, the boy could be more easily spared from the field to the school, from the loom to the lecture. The primal curse lay lighter upon men in the old time. The daily bread was won with less sweat of brow.

But to return. While primary education is conducted by means of institutions entirely or partly eleemosynary,—National, British, Parochial, and Ragged Schools,—the management of the commercial education of the country is confided to private enterprise, without rivalry, let, or hindrance, on the part of the State. The profession of schoolmaster requires no capital, and, consequently, is regarded with a certain contempt by the class from which the pupils come. And thus it often happens, that a man who is not fit for anything else is made a schoolmaster. Not unfrequently the education whose avowed object is to fit the pupils for success in commercial life, is conducted by a *ci-devant* bankrupt tradesman, who succeeds in his new venture because his customers are unable to test the genuineness of the wares in which he deals. In all professions the charlatanism of 'the faculty' is commensurate with the ignorance of the clients; and the prospectuses issued by these venders of universal knowledge, rival in unblushing quackery the harangues of Scoto Mantuano, or the newspaper puffs of Barnum. All the sciences, and all the arts, a dozen languages, ancient and modern, and callisthenics in all the branches, are offered—at an unprecedentedly low figure. The hierophant himself, while perfectly willing to communicate to the young neophyte the latest secrets wrung from nature by astronomer and chemist, does not disdain to initiate him in the humbler mysteries of 'ciphering' and 'double-entry.' I have heard of one of these worthies who, entering into imprudent detail, included among his classical text-books 'the works of Alexander the Great.'

It seems strange, at first sight, that the private speculator in young minds should court parental favour by professing his ability to teach the very branches which those same parents denounce as worthless when taught in grammar-schools. But, not to mention the facile satisfaction thus afforded to the professor's vanity, and, by reflection, to the parent's vanity

also,—not to mention the lingering prestige which still attaches to these studies, and which has produced the familiar combination 'a scholar and a gentleman,'—we may observe that what, in grammar-schools, is the staple of training, and obligatory, is here optional, and a mere item in the great sum of knowledge,—all which the pupil will have mastered and made his own by the time he leaves the school-bench for the office-stool, at the ripe age of fourteen. Seriously, it is alarming to think of the education these lads get, when we consider that, well taught or ill taught, they will, in due course of nature, grow into TEN-POUND HOUSEHOLDERS,—that privileged class into whose hands the Reform Bill confided the ultimate government of this great country. In spite of 'improved systems of education,' I do not find that the development of intelligence, morality, and integrity among the smaller tradesmen has at all kept pace with the growth of their political privileges, or that their present state is such as to make us acquiesce contentedly in their possession of imperial power. One cannot properly respect even the national sovereignty when vested in the hands of men who, not content with poisoning our food and our medicine, by a refinement of cruelty dole them out to us so as to protract our sufferings by false weight and scant measure.* When I say that the petty tradesmen of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were, as a class, better, wiser, and honester than those of the nineteenth, I am not echoing the assertion of a prejudiced Tory,—a blind lauder of the good old time, but stating a conclusion which must inevitably be formed by every impartial student of English literature and English history. They had more self-respect, and were more respected by others. Integrity and honesty were not held to be only 'wholesale' virtues, but the small shopkeeper in a country town stood upon his honour as

* The dishonesty of retail trade, which has now grown to such a pitch, is not in its beginnings a thing of yesterday. As early as 1724, an act was passed to prevent the adulteration of drugs; and Swift wrote an ironical tract in defence of the practice. A Jacobite would say that it commenced when Astrea emigrated to St. Germains. He would be about right as to the time, however wrong as to the cause. It has constantly grown with the growth of competition, the increased difficulty of making an honest livelihood, and the consequent pressure of temptation. Let us in fairness acknowledge that if we have less integrity among our shopkeepers, we have more among our statesmen, which may perhaps be owing to the growth of publicity, and the increased probability of being found out. If our great police-inspector, the press, would turn its dark lantern now and then from Downing-street, and flash it suddenly upon Cheapside, it would give a strong impulse to integrity there.

much as the greatest merchant who paced the aisles of 'Paul's.' Accordingly, the estate of a tradesman, however small his shop and scant his stock, was no despised estate. It was no uncommon thing for the younger sons of ancient families to make a living by retail trade. Dryden's brother, afterwards baronet, was a tobacconist in a small way. Samuel Pepys's father, himself sprung from an old stock, was by trade a tailor. Nor was the son, however vain, ashamed of the fact. It cannot be denied that, concurrently with the diminution of aristocratic privileges, and the increase of the democratic element in our constitution, an opposite change has been going on in our social state,—namely, a gradual severance and estrangement between class and class. The result has been to generate pride and insolence on the one hand, and, on the other, hatred at heart, concealed by servility of manner, and thence loss of self-respect, insincerity, and fraud. In old times the son of the gentleman sate on the same bench, and learnt the same lesson as the son of the mercer or the smith, and all three trembling together before the frown of Sir Holofernes, repeated their *singulariter nominativo hic, hæc, hoc.* The recollection of their boyhood passed under the same pedagogue, of their companionship in the delights of truant-holydays and in the equal justice of the retributive ferule, made them friends through life, and neither smith, mercer, nor gentleman played their respective parts one whit the worse for knowing and loving one another. Now, these classes are separated, from childhood upwards, and are kept separate through life. I am far from saying that the change in the system of education—viz., the abandonment of general for special training—is the only cause of the change in society which I regard with regret and alarm. It may, indeed, be, in the first instance, not a cause at all, but an effect and symptom of causes more subtle and more remote; but, if it be so, I cannot doubt that it acts as a cause in its turn, to perpetuate and aggravate the evil. I am not so absurd as to suppose that this evil can be cured by a return to the institutions of a former age, if even that were possible, which it is not; but I maintain, that in devising a remedy for this and other social evils,—a barrier against this and other social dangers, we can find no guide so sure as a careful comparison of the principles and practice of our forefathers with the results to which they led. The past time is more full of instruction than the present, simply because, in the former case, we have clearly before us both principles, practice, and results, while in the latter it is hard to trace any principle at all in the compromises of conflicting parties,—the practice is vague and

wavering, the results are yet among the hidden things of futurity. What would be thought of a physician who, when called in to minister to a patient, took no cognizance of similar ailments with which the same patient had been afflicted before, nor of the remedies then used with success? Such a man would be neither physician nor philosopher, but an empiric and a charlatan. As the body of a man is said to change its component particles entirely in seven years, yet remains the same body still, so the political body changes all its members every generation, yet abides, in the aggregate, what it was before. In both cases constitutional peculiarities, for the most part, survive the change of the constituent material.

Many of the writers who most vehemently denounce the existing university system, are loud in their recommendation of English history. If they themselves had ever followed the study which they prescribe to others, they would probably have spared us many unfounded aspersions, and many impracticable schemes of reform.

To these I shall have occasion to recur in the sequel; at present I have to deal with the less sweeping complaint of the commercial people,—that Latin and Greek are of no use to them and their children. If they deny the epithet 'useful' to all accomplishments which are not immediately marketable and convertible into cash,—which do not enhance a youth's value per annum in the shop or the office, then we cannot reply; in old Chaucer's phrase, 'There is no moe to say.' But if that be 'useful' which trains a man's reason, cultivates his taste, enlarges his capacities for acquiring and digesting varied knowledge,—which helps him to distinguish truth from falsehood, right from wrong, beauty from foulness,—which makes him, in the best sense, a wiser, and, consequently, a better man,—if that be 'useful,' then I maintain that a liberal education, which proposes to itself these high aims, is as useful to a youth destined to stand behind a shop-counter, or sit on an office-stool, as it is to the heir of broad lands and a feudal coronet. No doubt, in this class also, as in the lowest, a stern necessity frequently compels the limitation of a boy's school days, and forcibly restricts his education; but in the majority of cases, the inferior limit is chosen deliberately. Whereas, a father who really consults for his son's best interests, will endeavour to obtain for him as large a measure of liberal education as circumstances permit, and even submit to hardships and sacrifices for that object,—for he knows that he is thereby enriching him with a treasure that cannot be gotten for gold, and whose price is above rubies.

Whether classical studies form a necessary element in a

'liberal education' is a question which I now proceed to discuss. But for clearness' sake, let us first define the meaning of the phrase, and then briefly describe the system as at present practised in England. We shall thus be brought face to face with the assailants mustered in page 285. This education, then, which our fathers also called 'polite,'—a term requiring no elucidation,—we call 'liberal,' as having no sordid ends, but aiming at the development of those accomplishments, sentiments, and manners, the combination of which makes every man, whatever his rank, a gentleman. Perhaps it is best described by the word 'general,' as being an indefinite extension of the primary, as forming the best basis for all special knowledge (if I may be allowed to state by anticipation what I hope to prove), and as being applied, or applicable at least, to all, irrespective of their calling in future life. It is commenced and carried on, to a certain point, in grammar and public schools; in private schools of the higher class, which are frequently as excellent as those of the lower class are mostly detestable; in recently founded proprietary schools; in wealthy houses by domestic tutors; and finally completed in the universities, and tested by their examinations. The system is almost everywhere the same. Even the new proprietary establishments differ from the old grammar-schools, merely in providing an increased apparatus for the teaching of modern languages, and in giving greater prominence to history, geography, and 'useful knowledge.' And thus,

> Perhaps some modern touches here and there
> Redeem them from the charge of nothingness,

but in all essential particulars the system is unchanged. All boys, without distinction of capacities, dispositions, or inclinations, are made to pass through the same course of mental exercise. Is this right? A multitude of voices answer 'No,' and drench us with that never-failing illustration of the 'treacle and brimstone.' Each young brain, it is urged, like each young stomach, has its own idiosyncrasy. It is the duty of the teacher to study that idiosyncrasy before proceeding to apply his system. All boys have a natural aptitude for some pursuit or other; find out that aptitude, and they will learn with as much delight, and retain with as much ease, as children learn and retain the histories of the *Giant Queller* and his namesake of the *Bean-stalk*. It is profitless cruelty to apply force to an unwilling mind.

Now, I admit that all boys have a natural aptitude for something, but I deny that all boys, or even many boys, have a natural aptitude for study.

I shall tell you
A pretty tale; it may be ye have heard it,
But since it serves my purpose, I will venture
To stale 't a little more.

Once upon a time, at Cocaigne (an ancient corporate town in France), a certain hosteler, on the vigil of the Feast of St. Polyphage, assembled all his cocks and hens in the court-yard, and, with kind consideration for their tastes and inclinations, demanded of them whether they preferred to be boiled or roasted. He paused for a reply. At last an old cock, interpreting the general sentiments, spoke, and said that they had no wish either to be boiled or roasted. 'Messieurs,' said mine host, 'vous sortez de la question.'

Now it strikes me that, if the schoolmaster were to ask the boy of twelve years old, just confided to his care, whether he preferred Latin grammar or vulgar fractions, the boy would answer, in the spirit of the old cock, that he much preferred 'tip-and-run' to either. Children, so long as they remain in the quiet atmosphere of home, subject to the influence and example of mother and sisters, are often content with sedentary amusements, and display great love for tales, true or false, histories, or romances; but, once removed to school, the turbulence of boyhood asserts itself in a bitter hatred of all indoor occupation, and an incessant longing for muscular exertion. When a missionary catches a young savage, he does not conceive his business to be to supply him with the food he loves, and leave him to rove about in nudity, picking off the white babies of the settlement with little poisoned arrows, but to train him, against his will, to a civilized acquiescence in beef and broad-cloth, buttons and good behaviour.

An English boy is a young savage in his way, and a judicious application of force is not only not useless, but even necessary, not only not cruelty, but kindness. By force I do not mean violence; I would have them ruled by authority, not the birch. The first lesson, the most important lesson a boy has to learn, is the duty of submission to restraint, of application to a distasteful task, whose meaning and value he is only to comprehend hereafter.

It would be fatal to mental discipline and powers of application to begin by inculcating the notion that each boy need only learn what he liked. Supposing even that the master's 'vous sortez de la question' were to elicit a more logical reply, and induce the selection of some favourite branch of study; and then supposing, to fulfil the ideal scheme of the objector, that instruction in this branch were administered in different

degrees to different boys according to the capacity of each, you would then require almost as many masters as pupils; there would be an end of the system of class teaching, there would be an end of that emulous, but not envious, rivalry which is the best spur to industry; there would be an end of that constant intercourse, that equal conflict between mind and mind, which is as valuable a part of intellectual training as the instruction of the master; there would be an end of those opportunities for the measurement of self by the standard of others, by which all unconsciously profit, and which at last reduce vain folly to modesty, and endow timid merit with confidence.

I conclude, then, that the first subject of study must be the same for all, and that it is no valid objection to any subject to affirm that it is dry and distasteful, but on the contrary, a strong recommendation. It cannot be denied that this last condition is amply satisfied by the Latin accidence as exhibited in our time-honoured and much abused text-books, which I still prefer to *The Comic Latin Grammar*, though that is a product of an enlightened age, and has been greatly praised in the newspapers. But this by the way. The question now arises whether, besides the Latin grammar, we can find any other subject equally dry, and by consequence as powerfully tonic to the juvenile mind, which recommends itself as deserving, in lieu thereof, to form the basis of education by its more general applicability and greater fertility in after results. Except the Greek language, which, from its intimate connexion with the Latin, in structure and in literature, is a necessary complement to it, and not a possible substitute for it, I know of none. The modern living languages, as I shall hereafter show, are out of the question. They should be otherwise and earlier taught.

I read, indeed, the other day, in *The Times*, that Sanscrit is by no means so difficult as our Pundits pretend. Now, as Sanscrit is the common mother both of the Indian and Germanic tongues, and, besides, if not quite dead (for *The Times* gives one the idea of being able to speak it fluently), is yet dead enough for educational purposes,—considering all this, Sanscrit, I say, may, in the progress of enlightenment, or perhaps in consequence of a reaction in favour of antiquity, be substituted for the comparatively modern Greek and Latin, and the recalcitrant young Englishman of the twentieth century may be made to decline '*nau*' and '*siva*,' instead of '*musa*' and '*dominus*.' I have no objection: the children so taught will be far cleverer than their fathers. Let us only hope that our second childhood will be over before that day comes.

According to our present plan, boys begin with the easiest rules of the Latin grammar, which they commit to memory, and go on to the syntax, learning concurrently from Delectus and easy authors at once a vocabulary and the application of grammatical rules. A few years later, when they are supposed to be well grounded in Latin, the same process is repeated in Greek. When they have acquired a sufficiently copious vocabulary and a certain facility in analyzing the structure of sentences and in rendering them into grammatical English, they are made to go through the inverse process of rendering English into Latin and Greek, for the purpose of testing their knowledge, and giving it accuracy and precision. This is technically called composition. Prose composition tests the pupil's knowledge of grammar, and verse composition tests his knowledge of prosody, which is always included in treatises on grammar as a final and supplemental chapter. Assuming that the subjects of study are rightly chosen, the system of instruction seems to me singularly perfect and unobjectionable, both in theory and practice. It may be said, why not take English grammar, and go through the same process with English authors, applying the rules, perfecting the vocabulary, and learning to compose? I answer, that the English language has been already, in one sense, completely learnt in infancy, and that the familiarity thus acquired, without thought or conscious effort, would be found to mislead the boy's mind, and render the reverse process of scientific analysis almost insuperably difficult. The mental effort required to master the grammar of a language entirely unknown, great as it is felt to be, is less than that which would be requisite to master the grammar of the mother tongue. In the latter case the pupil has actually to unlearn lessons taught on his nurse's lap, and to divest himself of habits formed almost in the cradle. Any one language is most easily learnt, indeed can only be learnt scientifically, by comparing it with some other language. In teaching a boy Latin you teach him English also, and in the process you not only economize his time and energies, but gift him, to boot, with a new, and in some respects more perfect, instrument of thought and expression. A youth who has mastered the Latin grammar and learnt to apply its rules, speaks and writes English without a fault,—albeit innocent of Lindley Murray.

But again, it may be urged, admitting that the readiest and completest mode of acquiring a scientific knowledge of our mother tongue, which we have already learnt unscientifically, is to study some other language by the inverse method,

viz., learning the rules first and their application afterwards, might not some modern language, French or German for instance, be substituted for the Latin and Greek? I reply, that these and all living languages are to be classed in the same category as our own, and may be best learned by the same process. It would be a mere waste of time to devote the years of boyhood to acquire what may be learnt in infancy without effort from a Swiss *bonne*. Besides, they are degenerate and composite languages; their grammar is far less philosophical and perfect than that of the ancient tongues, and they are too like our own in structure to afford points of comparison strong enough to fix themselves on the attention and commend themselves to the understanding of boys. I am far from wishing to depreciate the study of modern tongues, and willingly subscribe to the dictum of Charles V., that he who knows three languages is thrice a man. Not that I value them less but Latin more, which is the groundwork and framework of French, Spanish, Italian, and the kindred dialects, and enters largely into the vocabulary of the Germanic tongues. The combined knowledge of the English and Latin vocabularies, and the general principles of grammar, makes the acquisition of any modern European language a comparatively easy task.

The grammar of the dead languages, then, is an excellent and even essential instrument of education. The amount of work done depends not only on the tractability of the pupil, but also on the skill of the master in the manipulation of the instrument, and his comprehension of its ulterior uses. If he knows his business, his constant endeavour will be 'to call into play as much as possible the faculties of the student himself; to compel him to exercise not merely his memory but his reason; and to inculcate accuracy both of thought and expression.'* Another process, by which the mind of the pupil is not less beneficially exercised, is Translation. First, the easier task of rendering Latin and Greek into English, and at a subsequent period, the reverse and far harder operation. Even the easier process can never become mechanical, and this is a great test of the value of any instrument of education. The dictionary supplies food for thought, but can never stand in thought's stead. Upon every new sentence a new act of reason must be brought to bear. Every word, even, however familiar, must be reconsidered in reference to its new context. For no single word in any language exactly coincides with any single word in another language. And thus in

* Wright's *Help to Latin Grammar*. Preface, p. vi.

translation, it is frequently impossible to do more than render the sense approximately. The student has, of two or more approximate renderings, to select the nearest—a matter of no little delicacy, and even difficulty. And thus he is led to see the importance of 'the study of words,'* to see the necessity of looking at each in its different aspects, of taking into account not only the meanings it bears to-day, but the meanings it once bore, its history, and descent. And this leads to etymology, an important part, but still a part only of the great architectonic study of language. As language is the great instrument of thought, precision of thought is unattainable except by a knowledge of language. I may be allowed to quote on this point the words of Mr. J. S. Mill (*Logic*, c. i. 1), an authority who will not be suspected of prejudice or partiality:—

> Language is evidently, and by the admission of all philosophers, one of the principal instruments or helps of thought; and any imperfection in the instrument or in the mode of employing it is confessedly liable, still more than in almost any other art, to confuse and impede the process, and destroy all ground of confidence in the result. For a mind not previously versed in the meaning and right use of the various kinds of words to attempt the study of methods of philosophizing would be as if some one should attempt to make himself an astronomical observer, having never learned to adjust the focal distance of his optical instruments so as to see distinctly.†

And as any analysis of the reasoning process in general must commence by an analysis of language, so it is necessary to acquire the habit and the power of analyzing language, in order to be able to reason correctly at all. Whatever the subject matter may be, no man can expound it with scientific precision unless he is acquainted with the etymologies and mutual relations of the terms he employs. Thus the study of language—philology in its widest sense‡ is the best basis of education for the man of science as well as for the man of letters. The first necessary step to this knowledge is the study of the ancient classical languages. Hence, from a new point

---

* I cannot quote the title of one of the most delightful little books in our language without a passing word of thanks to its author.

† Compare also Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, b. iii. c. 1.

‡ On the importance and true province of philology in a system of education, I would refer the reader to the admirable introductory chapters of the *New Cratylus*, where the subject is fully and most ably discussed.

of view, we are led to the re-assertion of my main proposition. And so 'all roads lead to Rome.'

Another great and important object which is attained by making the ancient languages an integral part of education must not be passed over; and that is the development of the critical faculty, in other words, the cultivation of taste. It must be allowed, and, indeed, it is frequently urged as an objection to the system, that a young boy can be brought to take but a feeble interest in the metamorphoses of Lycaon and Daphne, the trials of pious Æneas, the up-country marches of Cyrus, or even the wrath of Achilles. The reason is that his whole attention is centred in the language, the difficulties of which, requiring to be thoroughly mastered step by step, compel him to proceed so slowly as to lose all interest in the story. Now, as I have before observed, the duty of education, properly so called, is not merely to add to, but also, in some respects, to counteract the acquirements of infancy and childhood. So it is in the case before us. Up to this period the boy has been accustomed to regard, in the stores of romance which form the whole of his present treasure, the meaning only, and not the language,—the substance, not the form. His Ovid and his Xenophon, his Virgil and his Homer, are regarded from the opposite point of view. He is made now to take cognizance of the form rather than the substance. Thus his mind is enabled to conceive form as an object of thought, distinct from the subject matter, and *vice versâ*, and hence, generally, to judge of the application of the one to the other in literature with a degree of accuracy which is never attained except by those whose critical faculty or taste has received this slow, but sure, training in boyhood and in youth.

Good taste is not instinctive, nor of natural growth. The most intelligent child will often show the worst taste. So far as form is concerned, a child seldom appreciates anything beyond sounding long-tailed words in prose and jingling rhymes in verse. He has to be taught that prose may be beautiful without polysyllables, and verse harmonious without rhyme. And, I repeat, it is only by the employment of literary models widely different from those of our own country and our own time, in thought, language, and expression, that this result can be obtained.

In these studies, with the addition of ancient history and ancient geography, which necessarily includes to a certain extent modern geography also, and, towards the close, Euclid and algebra, a boy's school-days pass.

But before we leave the school for the university, we must notice the loud cry which has been raised out of doors for

modern history. 'Teach boys modern history,' say they, as if modern history lay in a nutshell, and could be taught like Rule-of-Three. We should like to take one of these gentlemen into a great library, and show him how many thousands of volumes go to form what he talks so glibly of as 'modern history.' Having convinced him of the impossibility of getting through a complete course of modern history on this side of fifty, much less before eighteen, we should then like to know what periods he would select, and what text-books? We are curious to learn what portion of this world's history since the fall of the Roman empire a boy must know, and what portion he may be ignorant of. Our ideal companion would perhaps solve the difficulty by declaring, with the honourable Member for the West Riding, that whatever is most modern is best. We arrive, therefore, at *Alison's History of Europe.* Now, what with the school-lessons above described, and the needful intervals of sleep, eating, cricket, and general relaxation, boys have not much spare time on their hands. Considering this, and considering also that the length of each lesson must be fixed with due regard to the slowest intellect of the class, the perusal of this work (which by no means includes the whole of 'Modern History,') would occupy about six years! But the objector may say, I have seen a book called '*Compendium of History,*' which includes all modern history, and ancient too, in a space of three hundred pages. We also have seen the book, and a most loathsome object it is—a mere series of dry facts and dates, which may be learnt, page by page, for repetition by the aid of some idiotic gabble, called *memoria technica,* which the learner regards with just repugnance, and within a few days inevitably forgets.

In what I have to say about university education, I wish to be understood as speaking of Cambridge only, of which alone I am entitled to speak from personal knowledge and experience. Doubtless my remarks, if true of Cambridge, will be approximately true of Oxford also; but to be strictly true, they would require to be re-stated, with certain modifications in detail, the explanation of which would be inconsistent with my prescribed limits and irrelevant to my main purpose. So strong, indeed, is the generic resemblance between those 'two most noble and most equal sisters,'* that they are perpetually confounded in the panegyrics or tirades of strangers; on the other hand, we, the *alumni,* are prone to dwell exclusively upon their distinctive differences. But this by the way.

* Ben Jonson's Dedication to *The Fox,* vol. iii., p. 161. Ed. 1816.

The University of Cambridge, like all universities, has a twofold character. It is at once a depository and a seminary of learning. It has a twofold object: the advancement of science and the education of youth.

By the theory of its constitution, it is supposed to have within its walls at least one professor of each great branch of human knowledge, who devotes himself to the especial cultivation of that branch, and is bound to give instruction therein to all comers. Its teaching, in theory at least, is only limited by the limits of man's intelligence. Its programme includes *omne scibile*, everything knowable. Now, the simplest plan—a plan, too, which would fit the public taste of the day—would be, having spread this feast of reason, to present each new comer with the bill of fare, and allow him to choose the dishes which might best suit his appetite and his digestion. The masters of the feast have otherwise judged. They do not prohibit the study of any science even to the new comers, but they attach all the honours and rewards they have to bestow to the successful pursuit of two or three branches of knowledge, leaving the acquisition of any others to be its own reward, which, seeing how keenly the English mind appreciates substantial advantages, acts as a kind of prohibition. It is true that modifying regulations have of late years been introduced in compliance with the popular movement, whose war-cry was, 'England expects every boy to be universally proficient at one-and-twenty.' It has been enacted that, in addition to the course formerly prescribed, every person shall attend at least one course of Professors' lectures, in order that our youth may acquire a notion of the mutual connexion of all sciences, by combining Greek with mineralogy, and algebra with comparative anatomy. New triposes have also been instituted in the moral and natural sciences, and, more recently still, in theology and its subsidiary studies, so that the University now not only recognises, but encourages by honorary rewards, the following branches of knowledge: mathematics, pure and mixed, natural philosophy, the Greek and Latin languages and literature, philology, ancient and modern history, civil law, moral philosophy, political economy, general jurisprudence, the laws of England, anatomy, comparative anatomy, physiology, chemistry, botany, geology, mineralogy, theology, Hellenistic Greek, Patristic Latin, ecclesiastical history, and Hebrew; and if the recommendation of the Commission be adopted as to the institution of yet another tripos,* we shall have the gratification of adding to this list political geography,

* *Report*, p. 101.

international law, diplomacy, and all the modern languages. One science only, or rather, part of a science, will then be unhonoured in Cambridge, namely, 'the mathematical part of crystallography.'* We commend this victim of exclusive bigotry to the patronage and advocacy of an enlightened press.

Nevertheless, these new regulations, though framed to meet the spirit of the age, have failed in producing any practical change. The curriculum has been extended, but no one will enter for the new races. The moral and natural triposes present, year by year, a singular spectacle—more examiners than examinees. The experiment, in the opinion even of those most anxious that it should be tried, is admitted to be a failure. Where the candidates are so few, the distinction of even the first place is not sufficient to merit any substantial reward,—and so long as the first place wins no substantial reward, it attracts no candidates; and thus the new triposes keep turning round in a vicious circle of inefficiency. But the evil lies deeper, and consists in the combining in one examination five or six different branches, each of which might well form the serious study of a whole life-time.

Most men are drifting to the opinion of the distinguished Professor of Modern History, who denounced the new scheme from the beginning, as tending to encourage 'a shabby superficiality.'† The *Report* of the Commission (p. 100) says:—

> It has always been a leading principle in the classical and mathematical studies of the University, to discourage vague and inaccurate knowledge, as fatal to those habits of strict observation and reasoning without which no fruits can be brought to maturity. We hold it to be of the utmost importance to the character of the University that the maintenance of this great principle should never be abandoned or even endangered.

From these premises it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the said triposes should be forthwith abolished. If they attracted students, they would produce the evil effects here deprecated; as they do not, their existence is a mockery. No partial changes can give efficiency to a scheme radically vicious. Above all, let us not deface with shams a system of education hitherto eminently straightforward and honest. Let the University content itself with being the depository of these various sciences; let it secure, if possible, a succession of eminent men to cultivate each, and to give instruction therein to any one who, after passing through the course of mental discipline prescribed to all, may feel a disposition to

* *Report*, p. 26. † *Lectures on the History of France*, Preface.

devote himself to this science or that. The study will be its own reward. What honours can you devise for a botanist or zoologist equal to that of giving his name to a new lichen or a new barnacle? It is to be hoped that, for the future, 'the common sense of most' will prevent, as in this case it has nullified, ill-considered change.

Hitherto, by the old theory, the University was held to be, on the one hand, bound to provide instruction in all branches of knowledge for any member who chose to avail himself of it, but, on the other hand, entitled to select particular branches for the compulsory training of all under-graduates. The selection which was made I conceive to have been the best possible. It was not made hastily, or at hap-hazard, but was dictated to successive generations by long experience, by a profound acquaintance with the requirements of the mind of youth, and by an enlightened view of the respective capabilities of different kinds of knowledge. The true reform, I conceive, would have been to remedy our admitted deficiencies on the first point,* and, as regards the second point, to postpone all alterations affecting a principle till time had been given for a full discussion of the question. I am sure that the result of such discussion would be this:—Admitting, as the University always has admitted, the necessity of such modifications in detail as may be dictated by the change of times, the growth of science, and gathered experience, mathematics and classics must remain the best and only solid basis of general education.

It cannot be too often repeated that the object of a general or liberal education is not to impart the greatest possible amount of what is strangely and falsely called 'Information,' but rather in the true sense of that much-abused word—to *inform* the mind, to fit it for the acquisition and retention of all sound learning, and for the perception of beauty and truth. To effect this we must employ such processes as shall train the three great faculties, reason, memory, imagination, to a natural and harmonious development. That mind is maimed and crippled wherein one of these members has been exercised to the neglect and enfeeblement of the other two.

All reasoning is in its essence the same, and may ultimately

* It is not a little remarkable, that the Commissioners have not included, in the subjects for which they recommend the creation of new Professorships, either the English language or comparative philology. The latter is a science as yet too inchoate and imperfect to be made part of our classical examinations, but we cannot doubt the great results which the next age will reap from the study, and the sooner it is recognised and taught in the University the better.

be reduced to the common forms of logic, but it differs in the process according to the subject matter to which it is applied. In this latter point of view, reasoning is divided into two main divisions, exact or demonstrative, and moral or probable. The study of mathematics exercises almost exclusively the former, the study of classics chiefly the latter process, and there is no conceivable subdivision of either process which is not brought into play by the one study or the other. Hence it is that these two studies are pronounced by the University to be correlative and complementary each to each, and neither is to be neglected by one who so far as human weakness permits an approximation to the old Greek ideal—aspires to be

A man four square, withouten flaw ywrought.

If either is to be neglected, probably a person would be better educated, that is, better fitted for the general business of life, by the exclusive pursuit of classical than by the exclusive pursuit of mathematical study. If the latter exercises the reasoning faculty with more intensity of thought, the former exercises it with more variety of process, and besides is less liable to degenerate into the mere mechanical operation which is irreverently designated 'putting x into a mill.' The general kind of reasoning employed in classical study is that which is constantly required for the solution of the manifold problems which every man has to solve during life to the satisfaction of his own conscience and of his fellow-men. 'Probability,' says Bishop Butler,* 'is the very guide of life.'

The classical student is unceasingly employed in collecting and classifying particular examples, and in applying general grammatical rules. In determining the sense of his author, he has to analyze the structure of each period, to select the most suitable out of many significations for each word, and then to regard the connexion of each clause with the sentence, and of each sentence with the context. He is perpetually arbitrating between conflicting probabilities. It would take many pages to write out at length the inductive syllogisms which have to be proposed and solved in determining the true meaning of a difficult sentence in Thucydides or Tacitus. The facility and rapidity with which an accomplished student does this, ought really to enhance in our eyes the value of his previous training, not lead us to depreciate it, or underrate the difficulties which he is thus enabled to master. Intuitive perception of truth is not a lucky guess, but a masterly condensation of long observation and painful reasoning.

* *Analogy of Religion.* Introduction.

Besides, the training afforded by classical is more general than that afforded by mathematical studies, inasmuch as both exercise the reason and the memory, but the former alone cultivates the taste, which is the sole guide and governor of the imagination.

But the truth is, no one, whatever be his especial preference, should undervalue either branch of training, or question the high wisdom shown by the University in compelling so far as it can the prosecution of both, and encouraging proficiency in both by the promise of honours and emoluments.

And these honours and emoluments are striven for year by year, with an assiduous devotion which a desire of the material prize could not sustain, were not the candidates animated by a sense of the intrinsic value and universal applicability of the studies in which they are engaged. No foreign University affords any parallel to the unwearied industry and intense application of the 'reading man' of Cambridge—a fact not sufficiently borne in mind by its assailants.

It only remains now for me to notice the fourth class, namely, Professional Education. This, by the present regulations of the University, each man is free to pursue as soon as he has passed through the general course; that is, as soon as he has taken his B.A. degree. In former times, when it was the custom to reside seven years instead of three, Professional Education was carried on within the walls; now, circumstances have in great measure taken it out of the hands of the University. Now, it is deemed to be necessary that Legal and Medical Education should be pursued in the metropolis; and a very small portion of theological learning is supposed to be necessary for the due discharge of clerical duties. Great efforts have been made of late—in obedience to a very general feeling both within and without the University—to organize a more efficient scheme of education in Law and Divinity; with what success remains to be seen. It is discouraging, however, that in the other faculty, namely, Medicine, a succession of eminent professors has failed to attract any large number of students. I have already expressed my opinion that Professional Education ought not to be begun earlier, to the shortening and crippling of the preliminary general education, and I believe that adverse circumstances will prove too strong for the attempt to organize it later. Of theology, it is not my purpose to speak; but with regard to legal and medical training, it appears to me that much might be done towards an efficient system, by connecting the Universities with the Inns of Court on the one hand, and with the London Hospitals, College of Surgeons, &c., on the other.

It is remarkable that the postponement of Professional to General Education now complained of in the Universities was earnestly desired by one whose judgment on such a point ought to command the respect of all time; I mean, by Francis Bacon. Hear what he says:—

Amongst so many great foundations of colleges in Europe, I find strange that they are all dedicated to professions, and none left free to arts and sciences at large. For if men judge that learning should be referred to action, they judge well; but in this they fall into the error described in the ancient fable; in which the other parts of the body did suppose the stomach had been idle because it neither performed the office of motion, as the limbs do, nor of sense, as the head doth; but yet, notwithstanding, it is the stomach that digesteth and distributeth to all the rest; so, if any man think philosophy and universality to be idle studies, he doth not consider that all professions are from thence served and supplied. And this I take to be a great cause that hath hindered the progression of learning, because these fundamental knowledges have been studied but in passage. For if you will have a tree bear more fruit than it hath used to do, it is not anything you can do to the boughs, but it is the stirring of the earth and putting new mould about the roots, that must work it.*

Bacon's authority may not have been without influence in bringing about the change which he desired, but it must mainly be ascribed to the silent gradual working of external causes. Changes so wrought are seldom to be repealed by an ordinance of man.

However that may be, I maintain that, as things stand, the University performs thoroughly and well what it professes; namely, to give the best possible preparatory training. To confine our attention to classical study, a moment's thought will show that it is indispensable as a basis of education for each and every profession. Theology deals almost entirely with books written in one or other of these languages. Greek is the language of the Septuagint, the Apocrypha, the Neo-Platonist Alexandrians whom St. Paul studied, and whom the student of St. Paul is bound not to neglect; it is the language of the New Testament itself, of a host of early Fathers, and many ancient liturgies. In Latin there is the Vulgate, there are hymns and rituals, there are innumerable volumes of divinity, canons, decretals, bulls,—in short, all the records of all that was said and done in the Western Church for fifteen centuries.

Again, can the physician pretend to a thorough knowledge of his craft if he be ignorant of the language of Hippocrates and Galen, the language of the men who first flung aside the nostrums of the empiric and the amulets of

* *Advancement of Learning*, b. ii., p. 68. Ed. 1826.

the juggler, and by patient observation and acute thought made medicine a science and surgery an art? In this, as in almost all sciences and arts, the Greeks have a firm logical groundwork and a faultless terminology. Still less can he be ignorant of Latin, which comprises all the medieval records of the craft, all the terms of the materia medica, and in which at this very day he writes his prescriptions.

Nor, again, would any counsel be rightly styled 'learned in the law,' if he could not read the *Institutes* of Justinian in the original, or were ignorant of the history of that people from whose code, civil and criminal, all the laws of all modern nations are ultimately derived, and whose language still furnishes the whole legal phraseology. It is, I think, no exaggeration to say, that in the constitution of every existing state traces may be found of the ancient Roman power, either derived by tradition from Imperial, or introduced in imitation of Republican, Rome. From the Rome of a later day comes the whole framework of our Ecclesiastical Constitution. From the Romans, too, mediately or immediately, is derived a great portion of the language in which the lawyer has to plead. No lawyer, therefore, who is worthy of the name, can be ignorant of the language, history, and antiquities of that great people, nor by consequence, of that still greater people from whom the Romans borrowed all their arts, nearly all their literature, many of the fashions and habits of their daily life, and even the first beginnings of their legislation. For the Greek dominion over the realms of thought was as undisputed as the Roman over the realms of earth. Almost every field of literature and science the Greeks may claim as their own by the right of prior discovery. Few are the directions in which the modern explorer does not find traces of Greek settlement and occupation. Even when they did not penetrate into the interior, as in the case of Sicily, they at least colonized the coast. Even in mathematical and physical science and in mechanical arts, the rapid extension of which is the boast and glory of modern times, the Greeks took the first steps. In all the forms of literature, in the fine arts, in the moral sciences, modern nations—counting together a population perhaps twenty times more numerous than that of Hellas and its colonies, with their manifold advantages in accumulated knowledge, increased experience and extant models—have scarcely equalled and never surpassed the unaided efforts and spontaneous developments of Greek skill and Greek genius. Time and chance, the blind workers—abetted by the no less blind workers, ignorance, barbarism, and bigotry—have too often conspired to involve in one common destruction the temple and the library,

the statue and the picture; and probably the extant remains of Greek literature bear no larger proportion to the whole mass than the ruins of Athens bear to the thick-clustered glories which delighted the eye of Hadrian; still enough remains to prove by an infallible test the right of Homer, Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Phidias, and others to rank for ever among the foremost names of time. Who, having seen, can forget, or who, not having seen, does not desire to see, those columns of Phidias, as they stand high above the modern city, alone in their beauty, white against the sky, the despair of the architect and the wonder of the world? And there are other works wrought by the Greeks of old, which shall stand forth conspicuous in undiminished splendour, long after the Parthenon has crumbled into dust.

For nearly two thousand years, from the time of Homer to the age preceding Dante, the Greek and Latin were the only cultivated tongues, the only literatures, of the European world. The first bright with its own brightness and strong in its own strength, the second beautiful, though with borrowed lustre, were the sun and the moon of the intellectual firmament, and by their light men thought.

Long after the birth of its destined rival, namely, modern literature, the influence of the ancient literature continued paramount and supreme.

Tu sc' lo mio maestro e 'l mio autore,

cries Dante to the venerated, almost deified, shade of Virgil; and it would not be easy to point out any author of that and the three following centuries who was not far more indebted to the treasures of antiquity, and a far closer copyist of its models. Afterwards, the imitation becomes less conscious and less obvious; but the debt due to antiquity is not cancelled by non-acknowledgment. Men talk contemptuously of 'the dead languages,' when, to this day, all the intellect of civilized Europe breathes their spirit and takes their form. Are they dead to us? From the teaching of schoolmen, legists, and churchmen, from the study and imitation of classical authors; from our personal intercourse with France, from the influence of modern 'romance' literature, the English language has become crowded with classical words, Latin and Latinized Greek, and often recast in a classical mould. No writer who is bound by the laws of the English language can emancipate himself from the fetters of Rome. We must accept the past, which we cannot alter.

Wherever men have surpassed their forefathers, they have done so, not by ignoring the efforts and advances previously

made, but by studying and mastering them, and by making the ultimate attainment of former men a starting-point for their own investigations. But we cannot, if we would, rid ourselves of the inheritance bequeathed to us by our fathers—an inheritance which consists not only of lands and houses, nor yet of institutions, language, and manners, but also of sentiments, opinions, and habits of thought. Man has a collective as well as an individual life. The great human soul never dies; and the noblest study to which any one man can devote himself, next after the study of Him in whom we live and move and have our being, is the birth and nurture and growth of Human Intellect. And it is a fact beyond all doubt, that the first fruitful germs* of philosophy were planted, the first flowers of immortal poetry blossomed, by the banks of the Grecian Sea. Except only that deeper philosophy and that sublimer poetry which sprang beside the Brook of Siloam, beneath the breath of God.

W. G. C.

---

* I say '*fruitful* germs,' for I am aware of the higher antiquity claimed for works in Chinese, Sanscrit, &c., which have had no influence on modern European civilization.

THE END.

00047665

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 March, 2016